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# THE INDEPENDENT

Friday 10 October 1997

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## INSIDE TODAY

### THE EYE

After all the hype, is Hercules any good?

### 21/COMMENT

Suzanne Moore: So we're all liberals now

## TODAY'S NEWS

### One pint driving limit

Britain came nearer to a one-pint drink drive limit yesterday. British ministers signalled their broad support for EU plans for a new European-wide drink drive limit of 50 mg per 100 ml. The proposal, tabled by Neil Kinnock, the transport commissioner, is meant to help cut Europe's 45,000 annual road deaths. The new level is already being dubbed "more than one and you're done". Page 12

### Whistle-blower speaks

The woman who battled for a decade to expose the full horrors of child abuse at homes in North Wales told a judicial inquiry yesterday that whenever she complained she found herself in hot water with colleagues: "It was like having a sniper behind the wall." Alison Taylor was the social worker who blew the whistle on the country's worst case of child abuse, first drawn to public attention by reports in *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*. Page 3

### Rail tickets cost more

Hundreds of thousands of commuters into London will face fare rises of up to 5.3 per cent, well above the inflation rate in July, which was expected to be the benchmark. Eight rail companies have been allowed to impose higher fares because they did better than their performance targets. The increases have infuriated rail campaigners, who point out that the previous government had promised that key fares would be "pegged" below or at inflation. Page 12

### Dario Fo 'esterrefatto'

Dario Fo, the Italian clown-playwright and master of agit-prop theatre, has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. His best-known play is probably *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*. But what does 'esterrefatto' mean? Page 10

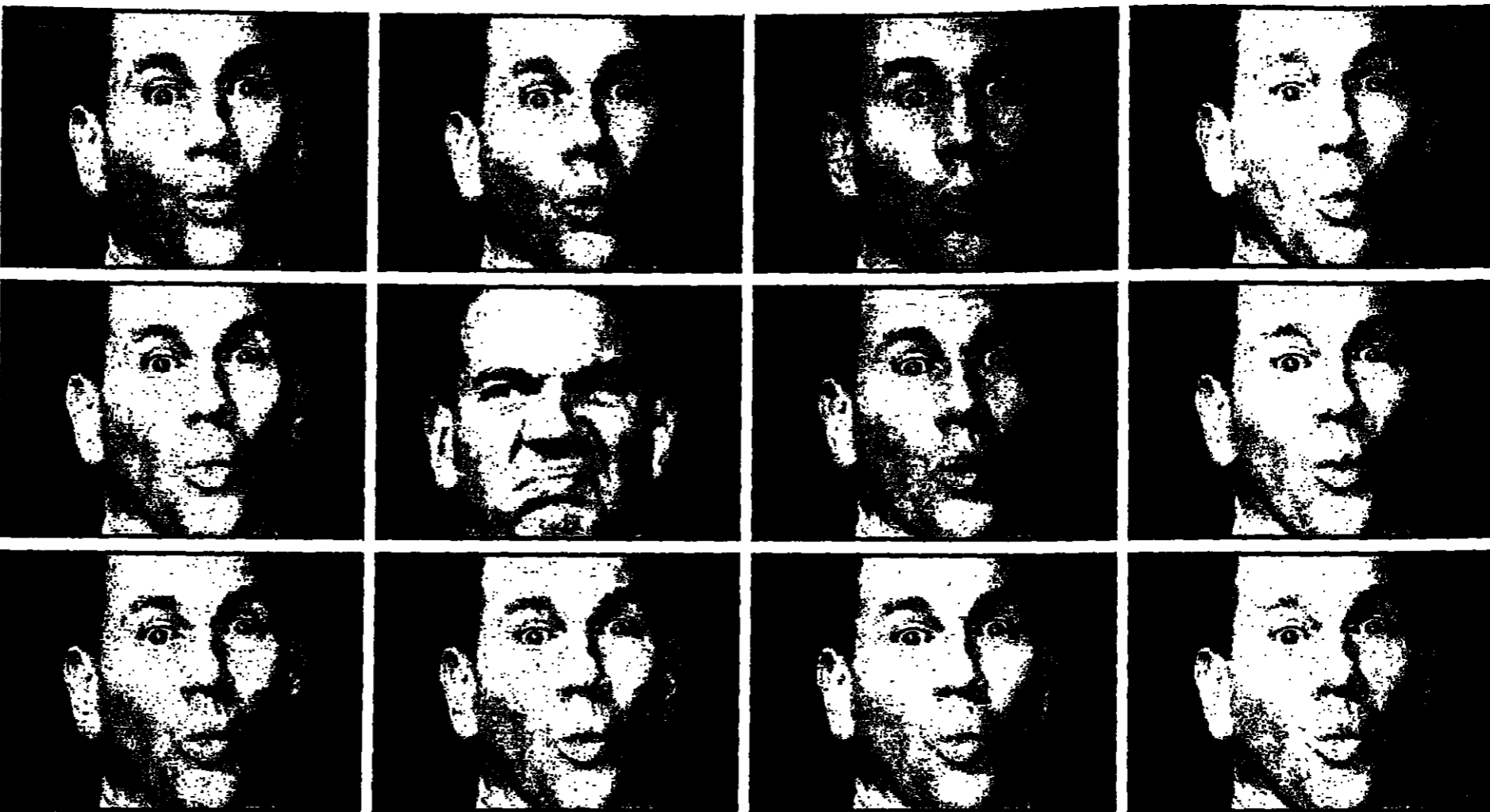
### HRT users reassured

More than one million women who are taking hormone replacement therapy were reassured yesterday that the link with cancer should not worry them too much. Scientists concluded from a substantial study that the treatment will do them more good than harm. But it isn't a simple equation: women who take hormone replacement therapy have a small increased risk of developing breast cancer which increases the longer they are on the drug. Page 5

## SEEN & HEARD

It would be fair to assume you knew everything about your spouse after 75 years. But when John Marshall, 98, opened what he assumed was a birthday card for his wife, also 98, he discovered a telegram from the Queen, congratulating Ina Marshall on her 100th birthday. Mr Marshall was pragmatic yesterday. "It wasn't the done thing in those days to marry an older woman. I've no regrets but I still find it hard to take in that I am actually her toy boy." Mrs Marshall was unrepentant. "It doesn't really matter now does it?" she grinned. "After all, I've got him as a toy boy and if I get fed up with him, I'll just look for another one."

## Michael Portillo: My apology



"The party became associated increasingly with the most disagreeable messages and thoughts ... Tories were linked to harshness; thought to be uncaring about unemployment, poverty, poor housing, disability and single parent-hood; and considered indifferent to the moral arguments over landmines and arms sales. We were thought to favour greed and the unqualified pursuit of the free market, with a 'devil take the hindmost' attitude."

"Second, we abandoned

almost completely the qualities of loyalty and the bonds of party without which party effectively ceases to exist. Some of this was ideological. Passions about the future of our country rightly fired people up, but wrongly led them to attack and despise their colleagues. Part of it was egotistical. There were MPs anxious to oblige whenever the media came looking for dissent, seizing the opportunity to be famous for 15 minutes. But now we are out of government, their views are sought more rarely, and their

once-famous faces are fading in the public memory ...

"Third, we were thought to be arrogant and out of touch. Much of it may have been no more than personal mannerisms that grated on the public after years in office. Some of it was insensitivity - using the language of economics and high finance when people's jobs and self-esteem were at stake. And when people looked at the composition of our party, they thought it too elderly, or too vulgar, or too out of touch in vocabulary and perceptions, or in some other way, unfamiliar and unrepresentative."

"Fourth, there was sleaze. I did not believe all that Conservatives were accused of. Even today, I do not think that wrongdoing was any more prevalent in our party than in others, and I expect the rotten boroughs of the Labour Party to prove as much in coming months. But it was certainly bad enough. Sleaze disgraced us in the eyes of the public. Their perception was of corruption and unfitness for public service. Such distasteful perceptions can endure and

do us damage for a long time."

"We should face these issues head on and deal with them. The last years profoundly disappointed our supporters, and disgusted many others. Those of us who were in the parliamentary party, and those of us who were in the Government, bear a particular responsibility."

Michael Portillo, former defence secretary, speaking at a fringe meeting at the Tory conference in Blackpool last night.

## And what's the new Tory idea? Caring and sharing

William Hague and Michael Portillo promised a new caring, sharing Tory party, tolerant and open to all-comers. Our Political Editor observes the first stage of the Conservatives' modernisation project.

The buzz-words of caring, compassion, humanity and tolerance became the mood music in Blackpool last night. The new leader, Mr Hague, and the Thatcherite leader-in-waiting, Mr Portillo, united around a New World message for the faithful at the party conference.

Just as Labour was forced gradually to jettison its image as a Euro-phobic, high-tax, nuclear-disarming and union-dominated gang of socialist militants over the past 15 years, Mr Portillo last night began the delicate task of dismantling the harsh, hard-faced impression left with the voters after 18 years of Conservative government.

But mixed in with the apologies there were a number of statements and suggestions that will dismay voters who have long regarded Mr Portillo as a bogeyman of the Thatcherite Right - and who saw his defeat in Enfield Southgate as the highlight of election night.

Mr Portillo said the best companies were those that treated their employees best; it was laughable to describe the last government "as a mad worshipper at the shrine of the free market"; Labour would bring no improvement in status or pay for the millions working in public services; the past 15 years have seen great improvements in job security; the instinct for social cohesion was vital for Conservatives; and the Tories were decentralisers by na-

ture. "None of us would wish to live in a grabbing and inhumane society made up of greedy and selfish people," he said, attacking a caricature of Conservative government. "Our enemies may have sought to attach such people to the Conservative Party, but they have nothing in common with our beliefs."

The man who was humbled by the voters in his safe seat in north London on 1 May returned to the Tory stage at a conference fringe meeting organised by the Centre for Policy Studies with a speech which also marked the first step on his

BY ANTHONY BEVINS

road back to Westminster. He told the meeting that the Conservatives needed to show social compassion towards groups like single parents, tolerance for the "span of human relationships", and attention to the "human capital" of business.

Mr Portillo also took the opportunity to pledge his support for Mr Hague, saying the new leader had every right to expect public and private loyalty. "If he does not get it," he said, "we stand no chance of being re-elected. He has shown that he will lead. Now the party must show that it can be led."

But *The Independent* has been told that new leadership election rules now being considered by the Tory backbench 1922 committee will make it well-nigh impossible for any challenge to be mounted against Mr Hague before the next

election - with the opposition of 40 per cent of MPs being required before any further contest can take place.

Capitalising on his new-found strength - with the full and loyal endorsement of the party in the country and of the conference activists, Mr Hague's colleagues said last night that he would be spelling out his vision of a caring, sharing, open and tolerant party in the traditional wind-up speech to the conference today.

In one passage of his proposed text, he says: "I want to talk to you about my kind of Conservatism ... I want to tell you about a democratic popular Conservatism which listens and is determined to show it cares."

Echoing Mr Portillo's message that money is not the be-all and end-all of Conservatism, he plans to say that his kind of Conservatism "believes that freedom is more than economics ... that freedom doesn't stop at the shop counter."

"I want to tell you about a changing Conservatism that acknowledges its mistakes but I also want to tell you about a proud Conservatism that has served this nation well, and will do again."

But Mr Hague also shares with Mr Portillo a new tolerant tone towards the sexual revolution, saying in media interviews last night that he did not believe ministers should be sacked for sexual indiscretions. Mr Portillo also said that the party had to deal with the world as it was: "... old taboos have given way to less judgmental attitudes to the span of human relationships."

In deference to his own party elders - like Baroness Thatcher - he added: "There remain many other people to whom the new norms seem all wrong ... Still, the party never rejects the world that is. Tolerance is part of the Tory tradition."

Conference reports, pages 6, 7

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WEATHER The Eye, page 26  
TELEVISION The Eye, page 12  
CROSSWORDS Page 32 and the Eye, page 25

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## COLUMN ONE

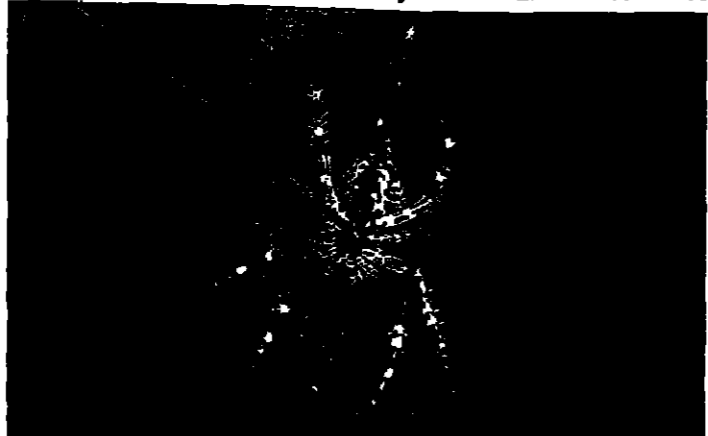
### Along came the spiders and sat down ... all over

It has been a tremendous autumn for the garden spider. The backyards, patios and shrubberies of Britain have been festooned with hundreds of millions of their big webs, up to a yard across.

The large female spiders, with bodies up to an inch long, wait fearlessly in the middle of these, confident that their sheer size and sticky silk will discourage any birds from eating them. They seem quite unperturbed by humans, too, unless you actually give them a poke.

"There are a lot more around this year than there are normally," said David Clarke, keeper of invertebrates at London Zoo. "That's due to the very sunny, still weather we've been having. They've done extremely well."

For most of the summer the spider, *Araneus diadematus*, (below) scuttles around the gardens of Britain barely noticed. That is because until



the autumn both it and its webs are fairly small. But, come September and October, the spider has undergone its final moult, and, if it catches plenty of insect prey in its webs, reaches its full size. The females' abdomen becomes swollen with more than a hundred eggs. The males, as is often the way with spiders, are much smaller.

The females spin big webs, up to a yard across, hanging them between shrubs and fences. They wait, fearlessly, in the middle of these.

In the next few weeks they will lay their eggs, wrapped up in a package of silk, and then most will die - although a few can overwinter. The eggs will hatch out in the warm spring weather.

Far from being alarmed by the spectacular spider boom, people ought to welcome the big webs for trapping the vast numbers of insect pests still on the wing.

The species is also known as the holy cross spider, because of the cross-like white markings on its abdomen. Its legs carry black and white bands and its colour is grey brown, sometimes with orange markings. The spider is found throughout the British Isles and is one of the most common.

None the less, the zoo has had many inquiries from people convinced the big spider is an exotic, and possibly deadly, import from the tropics. In fact it is harmless to humans.

Mr Clarke rejects any suggestion that the spidery autumn is a sign of global warming. "There are usually loads of them when we get these warm autumns," he said. In any case, this year's display is probably over now, with the rain and wind of the last couple of days washing and blasting away their webs.

— Nicholas Schoon

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#### TOURIST RATES

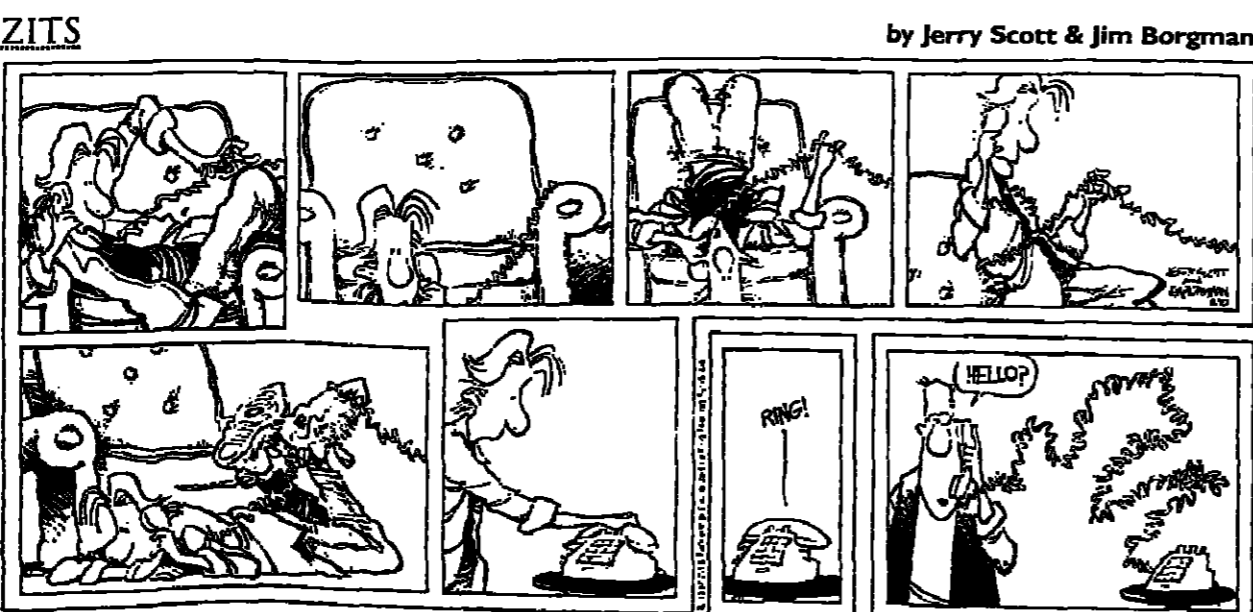
Australia (dollars)	2.15	Italy (lira)	2.716
Austria (schillings)	19.42	Japan (yen)	194.24
Belgium (francs)	56.94	Malta (lira)	0.61
Canada (\$)	2.17	Netherlands (guilders)	3.10
Cyprus (pounds)	0.81	Norway (kroner)	11.23
Denmark (kroner)	10.55	Portugal (escudos)	279.25
France (francs)	9.27	Spain (pesetas)	232.59
Germany (marks)	2.77	Sweden (kroner)	11.96
Greece (drachmes)	437.78	Switzerland (francs)	2.28
Hong Kong (\$)	12.17	Turkey (lira)	271.969
Ireland (pounds)	1.08	USA (\$)	1.59

Source: Thomas Cook  
Rates for education purposes only

#### 7.30 FOR 8



by Chris Priestley



by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

## PEOPLE



Brave faces: Josie Russell with her teacher, Lynda Roberts, and fellow pupils Photograph: PA

### Josie's mentor named as teacher of the year

The school teacher of Josie Russell, the 10-year-old who survived a hammer attack which killed her mother and sister, has been named teacher of the year in recognition of her role in her former pupil's recovery.

After the attack in July last year, Lynda Roberts recorded stories and poems for doctors to play to Josie, whose severe head injuries damaged her ability to communicate.

The teacher's voice was one of the few to which the child responded.

Once Josie had returned to the classroom at tiny Goodnestone Primary School near Canterbury, Kent, Lynda created new lessons to ensure that the injured girl was accepted by her classmates, who were also struggling to come to terms with the tragedy.

Josie and her father Shaun travelled from north Wales, where they moved earlier this year, to a ceremony in London yesterday. Josie presented her former teacher with the award together with an £8,000 bursary for school funds.

Lynda, who was nominated as teacher of the year by head teacher Daryl Peck, had to tell her young pupils about the attack which devastated their village, and then break the news that their classmate

was critically ill in hospital. Among the school's pupils were Lynda's own son and daughter.

"It was definitely the worst day of my life," Lynda said yesterday. "I just thought about my own kids. I knew I was going to destroy their lives ... We were looking after young children so we had to contain the pain and fear within ourselves. We had to be strong and try to make the pupils feel our school was still safe."

When Josie left hospital and returned to lessons last November, Lynda used her experience of special needs teaching to "read" her face, recognising distress in her eyes.

She also tried to encourage her pupil to say her name. "On her last day at school, just before moving to Wales, Josie walked up to me and said 'Lynda' for the first time. It was the best present anyone could give me. I just hid my tears."

Lynda, who was described by her headmistress as an exceptional teacher, was selected from more than 1,000 nominations for the award by a panel of representatives of all the major teaching unions and organisations in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

— Lucy Ward

### Virgin feels the crunch over DJ Evans' breakfast show

Kellogg's Cornflakes has withdrawn sponsorship of Virgin Radio's breakfast show because the programme's new presenter, Chris Evans, does not fit with Kellogg's "family values" image.

The sponsorship, which reportedly would have been worth £4m to Virgin over a number of years, started at the beginning of this year when the breakfast show was hosted by DJs Russ Williams and Jonathan Coleman.

The two DJs - known as Russ and Jono - were unceremoniously dropped by Virgin when it signed a deal last week worth £1m for Chris Evans (right) to take over the breakfast show from Mondays to Thursdays.

An insider at J Walter Thomp-



son, the advertising agency which did the sponsorship deal, said: "Well, you only have to ask: is Chris Evans' brand personality the right fit with Kellogg's brand personality? His risqué nature is at obvious dissonance with Kellogg's family values personality."

Evans starts his morning show next Monday, the same day that

television presenter Zoe Ball and DJ Kevin Greening begin hosting Radio 1's revamped breakfast show.

John Pearson, managing director of Virgin Radio said that the cereal manufacturer had not pulled money out of the station, only the breakfast show, and a new sponsorship deal is being negotiated for another part of the schedule. Sources at the station also vigorously denied that the sponsorship, which included joint advertising campaigns and on-pack promotions, is worth £4m.

Russ and Jono have completed a week of negotiations with Virgin Radio and have agreed to take over the evening "drivetime" slot.

— Paul McCann

### Sky's the limit as Selina moves onward and upward



Selina Scott, the woman whose salary has more than doubled in a year, is reportedly "considering various offers" from broadcasters keen to sign her up in the aftermath of her departure from satellite broadcaster BSkyB.

A spokeswoman for Ms Scott, 46, said it would be inappropriate to talk about the new offers while she negotiates her departure from BSkyB, but claimed that broadcasters in the UK and abroad were interested in signing up the former ITN news reader.

However, industry experts said yesterday that while Ms Scott had tried just about everything in television presenting she will have a hard time matching the £1m a year she was paid to host a chat show on Sky One. "Watch this space," said Caroline Harwood, Ms Scott's assistant.

Ms Harwood said there were no hard feelings between Ms Scott and BSkyB and claimed that her departure had nothing to do with low ratings for her revamped chat show.

Ms Scott was hired last year by outgoing BSkyB chief executive Sam Chisholm to present a nightly celebrity chat show. However the show struggled to attract high-profile guests and at one point viewers had fallen from over 100,000 to 6,000.

Ms Scott's salary has moved inexorably upwards in a career that has seen her move from the north of Scotland ITV broadcaster Grampian to ITN, Breakfast Time, The Clothes Show and to America. Despite her success she has been a repeated target for unkind comment in the British press.

— Paul McCann

## UPDATE

### POLICE

#### Deaths in custody on the increase

Fifty-seven people died while in police custody in the year up to March 1997, a 14 per cent increase on the previous year.

Seven of the deaths were of black people, and six of these were in the Metropolitan police area, the Home Office's annual bulletin on police complaints and discipline revealed. This is the first year that the ethnic monitoring of deaths in custody has been recorded. Only last week an inquest returned a verdict of unlawful killing on the death of a Gambian asylum-seeker at an east-London police station. The 29 inquests completed at the time of the report found seven deaths to be due to natural causes, one open verdict, three misadventure verdicts, 15 accidental deaths and two suicides. Only 377 officers were disciplined, with 65 choosing to resign or retire before charges were completed. A further 77 were dismissed.

Chief constables have complained about the difficulties in sacking officers and are pressing the Home Office to reduce the burden of proof required to do so. The number of officers convicted of criminal offences dropped by 15 per cent from the previous year to 222. Of the 22,500 complaints made against the police 834 were substantiated - an 11 per cent increase. There were nearly 60,000 commendations.

— Jason Bennett



### RELIGION

#### Evangelism calls to churchgoers

Congregations have grown in more than half the country's evangelical churches, according to a survey published by the Evangelical Alliance UK yesterday.

The alliance, which seeks to reflect the views of a million churchgoers from more than 12 denominations surveyed 3,000 member churches and found that 53 per cent had grown in congregation size in the past year. Just over a third remained static, while 12 per cent lost members. Half of the churches reported a rise in child attendance, with one third saying there had been a rise in church-going among youth in the past year.

— Clare Garner

### ENVIRONMENT

#### All is not rosy in the Garden

London's Covent Garden Piazza was yesterday condemned as cluttered, over-commercial and unsightly. Twenty-three years after the fruit and vegetable market moved out, the piazza, with its designer shops and pavement cafés, has become a victim of its own success.

Some 40 million people a year visit Covent Garden to shop, socialise and promenade among street entertainers. But a damning study commissioned by the bodies collectively responsible for the area suggests that commercial greed are destroying the special character of the piazza.

Pavement cafés, maximising trading space beneath a canopy of corporate umbrellas, are the worst offenders. Geoffrey Holland, leader of the Greater London Council's original restoration team and chairman of the Covent Garden Area Trust, said: "Views across the market square ... have been lost and the whole area is in danger of losing the special quality that has made Covent Garden so popular." The study was commissioned jointly by the Trust, English Heritage, Westminster City Council and Guardian Properties who manage the market building.

— Stephen Goodwin

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# No glamour for Disney's sweatshop toilers

**Hercules, Disney's latest animated film, opened in London last night. Glenda Cooper, Social Affairs Correspondent, contrasts the glittering premiere with the wage of £2 a day paid to Haitian workers who make Disney products.**

The charity World Development Movement (WDM) yesterday accused Disney - symbol of all-American wholesomeness - for making huge profits in the United Kingdom and the United States while buying from sweatshops in places such as Haiti.

Disney spent £22m marketing *Hercules* in the US, the charity says. Women sewing Disney T-shirts are being paid 17p an hour while Disney's chief executive, Michael Eisner, earns £6,250. To raise the daily wage from £1.35 to £2.81 as the workers wish would cost Disney just 4 per cent of the money already taken from *Hercules*.

Disney, however, says there is another side to the story: the company complies with all the applicable laws. And in a country where 80 per cent of the population are unemployed, jobs are few and hard to come by. "Companies moving out - that is definitely not what the workers want," said Charles Arthur, of the Haiti Support Group. "We wish they would send more orders. But they want to have their rights to a union respected."

Haiti is one of the poorest

countries in the world. The minimum daily wage has been set at 36 gourdes (£1.35) since 1995 but inflation is running at 117 per cent per cent. Factory workers often share a bag of charcoal costing 20 gourdes (75p) because they cannot afford to buy it themselves. Food can take another half to one-third of the daily wage and even daily transport fares take out 1.50-2.50 gourdes for a single journey.

More than half the daily wage is spent on rent and women paid on a Friday often do not have any money left to buy food for their children by Sunday, so they are forced to survive on loans.

In September, interviews were conducted on behalf of WDM with workers from three factories in Haiti: LV Myles; Buddy, Villard and Faubert (BVF); and Classic. All three are subcontractors for Disney products.

More than 20,000 people work in assembly plants, one-third of which produce clothes for Disney, mainly women's and children's wear, and 90 to 95 per cent of the employees are women, most of them young and single and many with several children to support.

The report concluded that factories are keeping wages down to the lowest level legally allowed; forcing workers to accept overtime with little additional pay, sacking workers who join unions and refusing sickness and maternity leave.

The employees are paid according to work quotas, which they say are too high. Those who make the quota can have a bonus which raises their daily



wage to 50 gourdes (almost £2) but workers reported that those who did not make their quotas were suspended for two or three days or even replaced by new workers. For sewing a £19 garment, a Haitian worker receives just under 5p.

One woman sewing sleeves said that there were 50 garments in a packet and to make the quota she has to produce 35 packets each day, 1,750 garments a day.

Conditions were also criticised. One woman from BVF

described that in their factory serving hundreds of people there were three lavatories for women, of which two were blocked.

The same woman said that as far as water facilities were concerned, the workers were

supposed to drink from a tank that has not been cleaned since the factory opened two years ago. Recently, a dead toad was found in the tank and a man who went to the management to complain about this was fired. Workers now carry their

Animated attack Demonstrators in London protesting about the huge profits Disney is making in the West, while paying low wages to workers in Third World sweatshops

Photograph: Peter McDiarmid

IN THE  
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ON SATURDAY

MAGAZINE



Self-portrait of  
a 20th century  
Venus

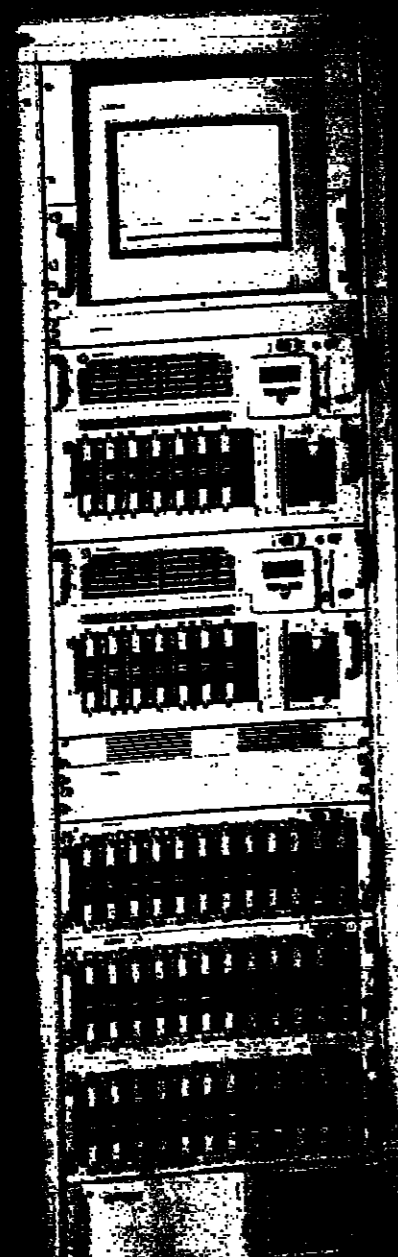
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the plan  
to stop Zola

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Cookbook;  
third course  
of offerings

## FULL ON.



COMPAQ

## At last, Alison Taylor tells how she exposed years of child abuse

The woman who has battled for a decade to expose the full horrors of child abuse at homes in North Wales was finally able to tell her story to a judicial inquiry yesterday. Roger Dobson heard her evidence.

Alison Taylor, who was then a social worker and is now a writer, spent most of the day quietly telling her story and describing how her complaints and warnings went unheeded for years.

After she made one complaint, a care worker telephoned her to say: "How could you do such a thing, we thought you were our friend."

Mrs Taylor, aged 53, was the social worker who blew the whistle on the country's worst case of child abuse, one which was first drawn to public attention by reports in *The Independent* on Sunday and *The Independent*.

She told the inquiry in Mold that on another occasion when she told a senior care worker that a girl was being sexually abused, the girl was moved elsewhere.

Mrs Taylor, who was suspended in January 1987,



Allegations: Alison Taylor blew the whistle on country's worst case of child abuse

months after she had given the police the names of six children who had allegedly been abused, said that Gwynedd county council would not admit to having a problem.

Mrs Taylor yesterday began giving her evidence to the North Wales Child Abuse Tribunal which is now in its 10th month. She said: "When I returned from training, children were being transferred to my

home and I was receiving more and more complaints from children about the abuse and ill treatment they had suffered and which they had seen others suffer. By the autumn of 1985 Gwynedd county council would not admit to the existence of a problem, the problem of mistreatment of children.

"I reported on an assault involving an alleged head injury. I made a written report to Lucille Hughes [then director of Social Services] and the response I received was an insurance claim for the boy and a telephone call from [a care worker] saying: 'How could you have done such a thing, we thought you were our friend.'"

Mrs Taylor added: "That was the end of the matter. I did not have any acknowledgement from Miss Hughes of the complaint."

Asked by Ernest Ryder QC, what happened after she made the complaint she replied: "Nothing as far as the assault was concerned, but I think shortly afterwards you will find that I was in hot water yet again over something. The pattern seemed to be that if I made a complaint then something would happen to me, it was like having a sniper behind the wall." She added: "I finally decided that enough was enough, that was the last straw. I could

not condone this environment any longer and I realised I had to do something. What I could do was severely limited because it was clear that the director wasn't interested."

On another occasion she said that a girl had complained that a member of staff had had sexual intercourse with her. "She had been in care for a very long time and her behaviour was a cause for concern, but we didn't know why. She became suicidal at times. Then she told me she was being sexually abused and I reported it. She was transferred but continued to make allegations and the next I heard she had been transferred to a secure unit in a hospital."

"I think she was shifted to keep her quiet. As far as I know there was no investigation."

In 1986 Mrs Taylor made a statement to police about naming six children who had allegedly been assaulted. In December of that year she was told to stay away from work and was formally suspended in January 1987. A disciplinary hearing was held and she was dismissed, but an agreement was later reached at an industrial tribunal.

In 1991 Mrs Taylor compiled a dossier of 75 separate allegations which she presented to the police.

## Klimt castle sold for £14.5m

A saleroom battle between two bidders left the London art market agog yesterday when a monumental landscape by Gustav Klimt sold for a record £14.5m at Christie's - more than double the expected price.

It was the highest sum paid for a picture at auction in London since 1988, the highest in the world this year and a record for the Austrian artist.

Depicting a romantic house, *Schloss Kammer am Attersee II* was painted in 1909 while Klimt was holidaying with his mistress, Emilie Flöge, on the shore of Lake Attersee, near Salzburg. The four other paintings from the celebrated series are in

national museums in Vienna and Prague.

Christie's experts had expected the Vienna artist's work to fetch "in excess of £6m" but were taken by surprise by the final price. Bidding began at £3.7m but rapidly climbed during three minutes of frenzied action at the King Street saleroom, London. One of the bidders was at the saleroom and the other, who won the duel, was an anonymous phone bidder.

"The previous record for a Klimt was £9m so the price is astonishing" said a Christie's spokeswoman.

Born in 1862, Klimt was Austria's principle Art Nouveau painter but took up a

more realistic style before his death in 1918.

A drawing by Michelangelo was also expected to fetch millions. Unveiled in London, it will be offered for sale in New York next January for an estimated £4m. *Christ and the Woman of Samaria*, one of the few drawings by Michelangelo remaining in private hands, has been consigned for sale by the Martin Bodmer Foundation in Geneva to establish an acquisition fund.

The powerful 17-inch by 13-inch black-chalk study of two figures is among the largest in scale of any of Michelangelo's drawings except for his cartoons.

— Stephen Goodwin

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COMPAQ

## Irvine opens up entry route for judges

Long overdue reforms of the procedure for appointing judges were unveiled yesterday by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine. But Patricia Wynn Davies thinks his changes could have been more far-reaching still.

Lord Irvine unceremoniously dumped Labour's long-standing proposal for a Judicial Appointments Commission yesterday, along with a promised consultation exercise on its potential benefits.

Instead, High Court appointments will be advertised, he will ensure there are more flexible arrangements for those starting out in the lower reaches of the judicial system, and an annual report will be presented to Parliament on the operation of the appointments system. "In the light of my proposed measures and other substantial priorities facing my department... I have decided not to proceed with further work on a possible commission but to concentrate on making those changes I regard as most urgent," he said in a press statement.

Lawyers reacted favourably to the measures, as far as they go. Lord Irvine has also promised to consider whether an Ombudsman should hear complaints from those who believe they have been unfairly treated by the appointments process.

However, the practice of selecting High Court judges on the basis of secret "soundings", or "consultations", rather than objective selection criteria will continue. Equally critically, the Lord Chancellor has no plans to reappraise the system for appointing QCs, or "silk", the principal route to high judicial appointment but one which fails to reflect increasing numbers of suitably qualified women at the Bar.

Lord Irvine's snap announcement provoked astonishment, moreover, among representatives of women and ethnic minority lawyers with whom he had recently set up a joint working group specifically to discuss High Court and QC appointments. The first meeting, to discuss terms of reference and attended by two Lord Chancellor's Department officials, took place on 22 September at the Law Society. The first full meeting has been scheduled for 20 October.

Josephine Hayes, chairman of the Association of Women Barristers, said: "I am astonished at the announcement in the light of the timetable we had planned."

Ms Hayes, 42, unsuccessfully applied for



Josephine Hayes: Concerned about the U-turn. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

an assistant recordership last year, along with more than 1,000 other applicants. She said: "We regret this sudden decision to rule out a Judicial Appointments Commission without any apparent consultation with informed groups. Lord Irvine has done a U-turn. We are gravely concerned at Lord Irvine's decision to continue the secret consultations procedure. It is contrary to good recruitment practice and an obstacle to the full participation of women and ethnic minorities."

Jenny Staples, chairman of the Association of Women Solicitors and another member of the working group, said: "The Lord Chancellor has only just set this group up. He hasn't waited to hear what we have to say. This secret way of appointing judges and QCs is not to women's advantage because we are not in the old boy network. Women and ethnic minorities will never achieve high judicial office without the introduction of objective criteria."

The latest figures appear to prove the point. There are 2,845 men at all levels of the judicial system and 306 women almost exclusively concentrated at the lower levels. There are just 15 non-whites.

## Yachtsmen tell of anguish as friend is lost after accident

The two survivors of a yachting accident in the Bay of Biscay have told how they heard their friend calling for help after their boat capsized, but were unable to reach him.

Andrew Nurse and Robert Beggs spent more than eight hours clinging to their upturned life-raft after abandoning the craft late on Wednesday night. They were finally picked up by a coastguard helicopter at first light.

Their shipmate - a 33-year-old so far been identified only as Ray - was washed away from the yacht in the Bay of Biscay, about 150 miles off the French coast.

Mr Nurse, 33, of Kilburn, north-west London, said the three men were taking the yacht *Ocean Madam* from Malta to Plymouth. After they reached the northern Spanish port of La Coruna, they ran into seriously bad weather, he said.

Speaking from Brest Military Hospital in Brittany, where he and 37-year-old professional yachtsman Mr Beggs, from Plymouth, are recovering, he said: "It was blowing a force seven or eight gale and then it went up to nine, and the waves were massive."

"The yacht just flipped right over onto its roof. I was panicking because the cabin was filling up with water and I didn't know how to get out. Everything was flying about the cabin. It was chaos."

Mr Nurse and Mr Beggs - both members of the Territorial Army, like the missing man - managed to set off an emergency beacon to alert coastguards, and got into the boat's life-raft. "Ray" was believed to have gone missing when the craft turned over.

"The worst thing was listening to Ray blowing his whistle, and not being able to see where he was or work out what direction the sound was coming from."

Later the men had to cling to the raft when it too was upturned. "It was bitterly cold, and we were trying to keep warm, but the adrenalin was pumping so hard I barely noticed how cold I was. I just wanted to live." A helicopter was called out, but was unable to reach them until it was light enough to locate them.

## BBC ready for 24-hour news

BBC 24-hour television news was yesterday given the Government green light for a launch next month. The service will be seen first by 1.5 million viewers in five cable areas and on BBC1 overnight.

The Government licence for the £30m-a-year service, called BBC News 24, was the last hurdle to be crossed before it could go on air. The first fruit of the BBC's plans for new digital services, BBC News 24 runs ahead of the digital age itself.

Satellite and terrestrial digital services have been delayed beyond their expected launch this autumn and will now become available next year.

## Last word on 'Britannia' future

George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, will announce today whether the government plans to reup the royal yacht *Britannia*, whose future has been in doubt for many months.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, has already ruled out spending public money on a new or refurbished yacht, but a number of organisations have bid to take it over and to run it as a museum, hotel or conference centre.

A new yacht would cost around £60m and the running costs would be between £6m and £12m per year. *Britannia* is due to set off on a voyage around Britain a week on Monday which has been described as her last, but a Ministry of Defence spokesman said last night that this might not necessarily be the case.

## Nanny's murder trial told of classic injury

The doctor who treated baby Matthew before he died tells the US trial of Briton Louise Woodward there was no earlier injury and the fatal injury took force - it was no accident.

Injuries from which the nine-month-old baby in the care of the British nanny Louise Woodward died showed classic signs of child abuse, her murder trial in the United States was told yesterday.

Defence lawyers for Ms Woodward, 19, of Elton, near Chester, have claimed that the brain damage suffered by Matthew Eappen could have been the result of an old, undetected injury. But on the third day of the trial consultant Dr Robert Barnes yesterday told the Middlesex Superior Court, in Cambridge, Massachusetts: "This is not an old injury. I see no evidence there was any previous injury."

Dr Barnes, neuro-radiologist and consultant to the child-protection panel at Boston's Children's Hospital, said the massive injuries were caused close together and "within minutes or hours" of brain scans he carried out shortly after his admission to the hospital. He ruled out a gentle shaking, a tossing on a bed or a fall in the bathroom as a cause of the brain injuries. "It would certainly have required much more force," he said.

He also ruled out a fall on the stairs said to have been suffered by Matthew the day before he was admitted to hospital as a cause of the brain damage. "This is a classic picture of shaken impact head injury seen with non-accidental trauma," he said.

There were angry scenes in the courtroom as Dr Barnes clashed with defence attorney Barry Scheck as he started to cross-examine him. Mr Scheck asked him: "Let us assume on February 4 there was no impact." The doctor said: "That's a hard one to assume."

Mr Scheck then asked him: "To assume there had been some prior bleeding in the brain, causing Matthew to have difficulty breathing." Dr Barnes replied: "That is not what happened."

Mr Scheck shouted at him angrily: "Were you there?" before Judge Hiller Zobel intervened to order both men to be silent.

Two medical experts conceded on Wednesday that the injuries suffered by Matthew could have been days or weeks old from some of the medical evidence. Dr Barnes said there was nothing in the brain scans he carried out to suggest that, but he admitted analysis of a blood clot removed from Matthew's brain which was not kept could have been "helpful".

Ms Woodward denies the charge and faces life without parole if convicted of first-degree murder. The trial continues.

## Fears for missing doctor

Police said yesterday they were "very concerned" for the welfare of a casualty doctor who disappeared from his home in the middle of the night, leaving only a jumbled message. Matthew Choyce, 34, left his home in Newcastle upon Tyne shortly after getting up to fetch a glass of water at 4am on Tuesday. His car was later found abandoned near a beach at Tynemouth.

His wife, Jane, 30, also a doctor, said he had become depressed after wrestling with the issue of what direction his career should move in. Dr Choyce is a trained surgeon and a senior registrar at Sunderland Royal Hospital and the couple have been married for two years.

Spokesman for Northumbria police, who are heading the search, said: "He's left a lovely wife and a good career. There were no problems with the marriage as far as we know."

"We don't think he was actually thinking straight when he left the house. It just causes concern that he's an educated man and it's very unusual for him to walk out of the house and just abandon the car, so we're very concerned about him."

Police were yesterday continuing a land and sea search of the area, as it emerged that he had tried to track down a society of old schoolfriends at Eton just hours before he went missing.

Dr Choyce had rung his father, Professor Peter Choyce, 78, on Monday evening, asking him to help him find members of the Old Etonian Medical Society - a group of former pupils, aged 20-80, with an interest in medicine. Professor Choyce said his son had sounded "pretty normal" and that a message found in the car was not "a classical suicide note".

Jojo Moyes



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The Samaritans

هكذا من الأصل

## Women having HRT treatment get more benefit than harm

Scientists yesterday reassured more than one million women taking hormone replacement therapy that the treatment is likely to do them more good than harm. Jeremy Laurence, Health Editor, examines the results of a study into the link between the drug and breast cancer.

Women who take hormone replacement therapy have a slightly increased risk of developing breast cancer which rises the longer they are on the drug, researchers have found. When taken for five years starting around the age of 50, the drug is estimated to lead to two extra cases of cancer in every thousand women before the age of 70.

Professor Sir Richard Doll, the leading cancer epidemiologist said the "extremely important study" had established the precise size of the breast cancer risk but it remained to be determined what other benefits and disadvantages HRT had. "It may well be that

the benefits of reduced heart disease more than compensate for the increase in breast cancer. It could reduce the risk of heart disease by as much as 30 per cent."

The two extra cases in every thousand are on top of the 45 cases that would anyway be expected among women in the same age group not taking HRT, raising the total to 47. Longer use, over 10 years, is associated with six extra cases (a total of 51 compared with 45 in the non-HRT group) and over 15 years with 12 extra cases (57 compared with 45).

The findings are based on the most comprehensive review of existing research on HRT. Fifty-one studies from 21 countries involving more than 52,000 women with breast cancer and 108,000 women without it were examined by a team at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's epidemiology unit in Oxford.

Professor Valerie Beral, co-ordinator of the study published in *The Lancet*, said that HRT delayed menopause and it was known that women with a late natural menopause had an increased risk of breast cancer. "The issue is how big are the risks and how do they compare with the beneficial effects. There is nothing so bad

in these results that women should stop HRT and nothing so clear that they can take it for ever. If they use HRT for a few years the effects on breast cancer are quite small."

When HRT is stopped the excess risk returns to normal and "virtually disappears" in five years, Professor Beral said. Although the study examined only the incidence of the disease and not survival, the cancers that occur in women on HRT appear to be smaller than in other women, possibly because those on the drug are alert to the risks and detect them sooner.

Cancer charities were yesterday bracing themselves for a flood of calls from worried women and were bringing in extra staff to run helplines. Family doctors were being informed of the results. Professor Michael Rawlins, chairman of the Committee on Safety of Medicines, said in a statement that women taking HRT did not need to stop the treatment. "If you are concerned and want to know more, you should make a routine non-urgent appointment with your doctor," he said. All women should be aware of any changes in their breasts and report them to their doctor.



Jackie Rossington: 'Six extra cases of cancer in women on HRT is still six too many' Photograph: Andrew Burman

## 'Depression lifted and I could cope'

Jackie Rossington, aged 44, she has been on HRT for seven years, since having a hysterectomy in her 30s. "For me six extra cases of cancer in women who have been on HRT for 10 years is still six too many," she said.

"I know so many women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and it is always at the back of my mind. I am going to see my GP to ask whether I shouldn't reduce the dose. The longer I go on with it the more concerned I become."

Mrs Rossington, who is married with one son and lives in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, said she had started the treatment after developing early signs of the menopause following her hysterectomy.

"I was getting mood swings and panic attacks. It was like having my mind turned inside out - even the smallest thing felt like climbing a mountain. When I started on HRT I felt a lot better. The depression lifted and I felt able to cope."

After a year she switched from HRT tablets to patches attached to skin. "Suddenly I put on a lot of weight. I halved the dose but I haven't lost weight which is worrying."

Going on HRT was the right choice, she says, because it allowed her to pull her life together. But staying on it is a more difficult decision. "You have to weigh the pros and cons. Life is a gamble and you just have to make your own assessment of the risks and then cross your fingers."

"In a ladies group I went to, six women were picked up at breast screening, two had operations and one died. If it can happen to them, I thought, it can happen to me."

— Jeremy Laurence

## Why smoking may help to lower the cost of health care

Smoking is bad for your health, but it may be good for the health service. Researchers studying the costs of the health service have discovered that giving up may be just what the doctor's accountant would not order.

Although smokers have more diseases and make greater demands on the health

service while they are alive, non-smokers live longer and cost more to treat when they are old. It is cheaper for the health service if people die young than if they live to a great age.

The study by researchers from Erasmus University in the Netherlands, found that health care costs at a given age are

as much as 40 per cent higher for smokers than for non-smokers. If all smokers quit, health care costs would be lower at first but after 15 years they would become higher than at present.

Life expectancy at birth for smokers is 69.7 for men and 75.6 for women but for non-smokers they are 77 for men and 81.6

for women. At age 70, 78 per cent of male non-smokers are still alive compared with 57 per cent of smokers. At age 80, the comparable figures are 50 per cent and 21 per cent.

The prospect of paying all those extra health costs and pensions may account for the reluctance of governments around the

world to take firmer action against smoking.

Lifetime health costs were calculated at \$72,700 (£45,000) among men who smoke and \$94,700 among men who do not smoke and \$111,000 among women. Writing in the *New England Journal of*

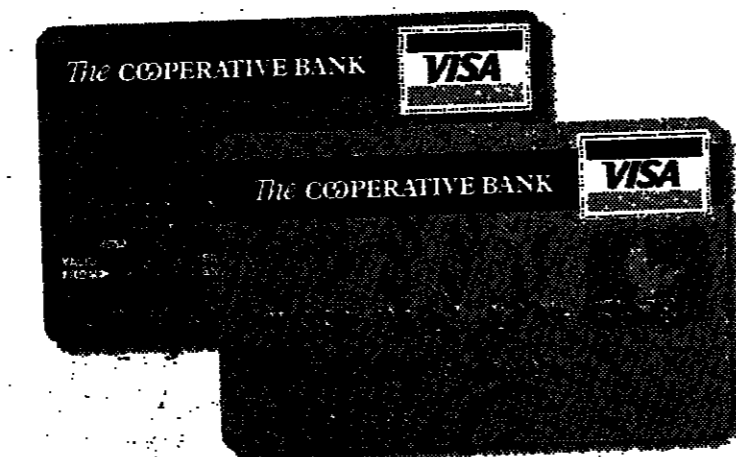
*Medicine* the authors conclude: "In formulating public health policy, whether or not smokers impose a net financial burden ought to be of very limited importance. Public health policy should be concerned with health. Smoking is a major health hazard...[and] should be discouraged."

— Jeremy Laurence

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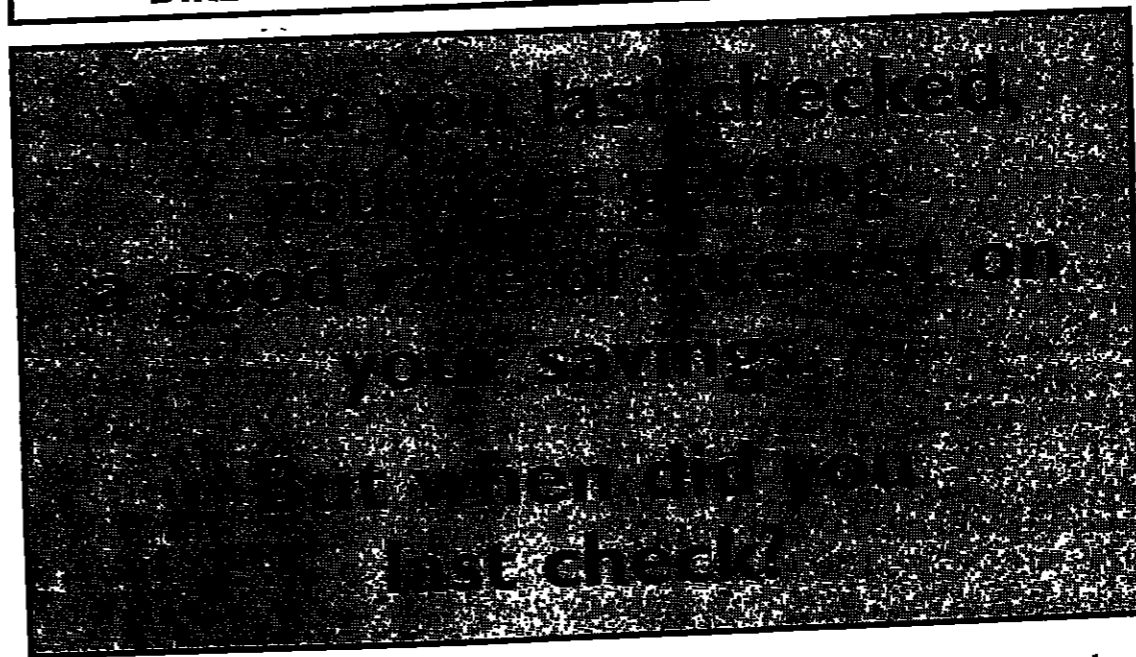
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# 6/TORY CONFERENCE

## Thatcher tweaks BA by its tail

The eye fixed on a British Airways ethnic logo with a look which over the years has turned many a Cabinet minister's knees to jelly.

Then there was a roar. The "Great She Elephant" as Denis Healey once called her, was on the rampage. "We fly the British flag abroad," she bellowed at horrified BA staff. "Not these awful things you are putting on your tails. It is absolutely terrible."

Her husband, Denis, stood beside her asking staff manning the BA stand: "For Christ's sake, why can't we have British designs?" He was told that some of them were.

Baroness Thatcher's anger had been roused as she toured the stalls at the back of the Blackpool conference centre by a new-look ethnic design on a toy aircraft on the BA stand.

Lady Thatcher, who had enjoyed a standing ovation for appearing on the conference platform, held up the famous handbag as if to strike a blow for order, and rummaged about. Then she pulled out a handkerchief and tied it to the tail of the toy, covering up the offending image, before stalking off with Denis.

British Airways said: "We are always delighted to welcome Baroness Thatcher to our stand or on board our aircraft. Today we had a lighthearted discussion with her about our new identity, which we enjoyed."

The spokesman added: "Our research shows that around the world people like our new identity." The people from the stand next door liked it even more. They were from Virgin Atlantic.

— Colin Brown



On the dais: Thatcher flanked by Hague (right) and Parkinson Photograph: Tom Pilston

## Rule change may protect leader from challengers

Conservative leadership challenges could effectively be barred under new rules being considered by the parliamentary party. Anthony Bevis, Political Editor, examines the backlash against disloyalty and disunity.

More than 40 per cent of all Conservative MPs might be required to trigger future leadership challenges like the one that resulted in Margaret

Thatcher being ousted in 1990.

The Independent has been told that new rules being considered by the Tory backbench 1922 committee could create an insurmountable obstacle to future leadership hopefuls like Kenneth Clarke. With a number of disaffected MPs hoping for the return of Chris Patten and Michael Portillo to the Commons, with a view to mounting a leadership challenge to William Hague, the new rules are bound to create controversy in the Commons.

After Baroness Thatcher was challenged, first in 1989, and then, successfully, in 1990, the leadership rules were changed to make challenges more difficult — demanding that at least 10 per cent of all Tory MPs should request a contest.

But one of the plans now being considered by the 1922 committee would increase the strength of that safeguard fourfold — requiring 40 per cent of all MPs to vote against the leader in a fully-fledged vote of confidence before a leadership challenge could be unleashed.

That is such a severe hurdle that it could create a deterrent to a challenge. If a leader got less than two-thirds support of MPs and decided to stay on, as allowed under the proposed rule-change, the party could risk making itself an electoral

laughing stock. Certainly, given the mood of this week's party conference, the rank-and-file membership could be expected to turn even more strongly against the MPs for their destructive disloyalty.

A Conservative leadership source has told *The Independent* that the leadership election "trigger" — which is now under the complete control of MPs — could be one of the issues to be examined in the final package of reform proposals to be considered by a special party conference next spring.

But he added that any proposals currently being considered by the MPs was "not cast in stone" — suggesting that they could, in turn, be subject to further modification.

In the most impassioned debate of the Blackpool conference week, rank-and-file representatives repeatedly called on Wednesday for a role in future leadership elections.

The party leadership is currently proposing that the membership should be given a proportion of between 20 per cent and 40 per cent in a leadership electoral college, with the majority of votes going to MPs.

However, Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare received a standing ovation after he had called for a 50-50 split between the membership and the parliamentary party.

### BLACKPOOL SKETCH: DAVID AARONOVITCH

#### Pink fairy sweetens William the orator

All day William practised his speech. Tomorrow would see the climax of his conference at the Dunrulin nursing home. Rumours were rife that the local newspaper might even send its Youth Correspondent, Evadne Trott, down to cover this interesting event. So, William, never to be found wanting when it came to determination, now positively shone with that quality, its glow illuminating his young features.

Even his schoolmasters could not have accused William of a lack of application as, methodically, he rehearsed his Great Address. In the morning he concentrated on presentation, locking his bedroom door and positioning his bedroom mirror for maximum effect. For two hours he practised in front of this looking-glass, trying to match his gestures to those of other great speechmakers, whose efforts he had seen captured on Pathe newscast. Jenkins, his faithful Welsh collic, meanwhile curled up miserably on the bed, her great eyes full of reproach, whining gently for thrown sticks and freedom.

But William was deaf to her entreaties. He was entering vigorously into the spirit of addressing the masses, as represented in his bedroom by the corner wash-stand. In alternate passages he entreated the wash-stand to greater effort, bullied it with new realities, opened its eyes to the wider world, praised it for its stalwart past and, almost tearfully, bade it follow him to its glorious future.

No gesticulation was left untried. William sawed the air with his finger, and cleared his mantelpiece of ornaments with one great, commanding sweep of his arm. He stuck out his jaw to convey pugnacity, raised his eyebrows as far as they could possibly go to signify ironic amusement and — most gruesome of all — smiled ferociously, as he received his imaginary ovation.

By lunchtime William was convinced that he had done as much as a boy could do, as far as style was concerned. Now only the content remained to be settled. Compacently, he was sure that the decrepit inhabitants of Dunrulin would be happy whatever he told them. He would call for the compulsory culling of the over-sixties, and still be received by a tumultuous banging of walking sticks. But his mind was on that other, bigger audience, whose perceptions of his Address would be formed by the reporting of the formidable Miss Evadne Trott.

So, the afternoon was spent in a damp corner of Farmer Jenks's barn, while the Outlaws thrashed out the messages to be contained in their Leader's speech. For once the presence of Violet Elizabeth, usually thought so soppy and wet as to be beneath even the expansive contempt of the Outlaws, was permitted. Grudgingly William had been forced to concede that this tiny girl had somehow been granted insights denied to others.

Violet Elizabeth, arrayed in a dress of pink and white, and resembling the sugar fairy on a Christmas cake, now took the floor. "I think your thpeech should be all about caring William," she lisped, "tho you should be compathionate." Braving the derisive snorts of Howard, she went on: "People want more hothpithalth, more thchooth, more pretty flowerth. They want to be nithe to each other, not natthy. They want to give their pocket money to thingle parenth, gay people, lethbianth, and beggarth. They do, William, I know they do."

Howard could contain his wrath no longer. "We might as well be girlst!" he exclaimed disgustedly. "Flowers and lesbians! We need to hang crim'nals, an' keep all our pocket money and play soldiers. Don't listen to her!" He looked up at William expectantly. But his leader was faraway, lost in thought.



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# 7/TORY CONFERENCE

THE INDEPENDENT  
FRIDAY  
10 OCTOBER 1997

هكذا من الأدب



Having a ball: Young Conservatives dancing the night away at their annual conference soiree

Photograph: Tom Pilsten

## VIEW FROM THE FLOOR

### Why the YCs deserted the ball

This morning I woke up with one of the most devastating hangovers of my life. Unfortunately, not even new Labour can provide a cure for drunken excess.

The reason for this was the annual Young Conservative conference ball. This event, even though enjoyable to an extent, is an era long past. Maybe this is even being recognised by the YCs themselves, with it becoming increasingly difficult to bring in young members. With an age base from 15 to 35, it is difficult to interest and entertain everybody.

Still, they had a good try at the ball, though at times the choice of music was a little unusual. Traditionally, the event ends with a rousing chorus of "Land of Hope and Glory," followed by an emotional "God Save the Queen." This year, "Land of Hope and Glory" was pushed from its regular slot in order to be replaced by "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life."

The Conservative youth seemed to be enjoying themselves, though, and even when the DJ decided to play even when the DJ decided to play Labour's theme tune, "Things Can Only Get Better," no one batted an eyelid. They just carried on dancing.

Other things had changed as well. In the past, this event used to draw crowds of five or six hundred people. This week there were a handful of diehard backs trying to network despite the fact that there was no one there to network with. Efforts had been made to bring in new people. For the first time, black tie had become optional but few people had taken this up. The event was thinly populated by about 120 young men in dinner jackets, accompanied by about 30 women. By the end of the evening the organisers were waving the £10 entrance

fee for any passing females who they could entice into the hall.

The problem is that most young people these days do not really want to go to events like this. Discos and dinner jackets do not go together. At least the leaflets advertising this year's bash did not bear the usual picture of a man and woman waltzing in evening dress. But the decision to replace this with something that looked like a Burton's catalogue from the 1970s – a man with swept-back hair – seemed a bit odd. It is clear we have a problem recruiting young people, but our main opposition is not Labour or the Liberal Democrats. It is nightclubs, pubs and cinemas. We need to offer a more vibrant alternative to draw people in. They may join now to have fun, but many will stay to take part in the building of the party later.

— Gavin Williamson

## Cabinet wets rebel over compromise on Europe

A rebellion by the pro-European "wets" in William Hague's Shadow Cabinet marked the first defeat for the right wingers behind the Conservative leader. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says the Euro-sceptics are ready to fight back.

A fresh split is looming in the Shadow Cabinet over the compromise policy to rule out a single currency "for the foreseeable future".

The "wets" in the Shadow Cabinet forced William Hague to retreat from his commitment that the Tories would oppose entry into a single currency for ten years.

But leading Euro-sceptics in the Shadow Cabinet said the compromise could not last, and they are preparing for a showdown with the pro-European frontbenchers who forced Mr Hague to back down. They are insisting on making it clear that Britain would stay out until 2007, the end of the next Parliament.

"We need to put some end dates in the policy. The compromise wording is too vague and people are picking holes in it. None of us know what it means. We have got to get this settled and we are going to return to it," said one Shadow Cabinet minister.

Some Euro-sceptics fear Mr Hague is showing tendencies towards compromise like John Major and want the row reopened at next Wednesday's meeting of the Shadow Cabinet. Peter Lilley, the shadow chancellor, tried to paper over the cracks yesterday, telling the Tory conference in Blackpool that some "good Conservatives" believed entry into a single currency could be in Britain's interests at some stage. But the divisions in the Shadow Cabinet are so deep that some on the left are ready to resign, if they are pushed too far.

David Curry, the party's agriculture spokesman, has made it clear to friends that if

the Government calls a referendum, he will campaign for a "yes" vote for Britain to enter a single currency, in breach of a Shadow Cabinet line laid down by Mr Hague.

The Tory party leader has told Shadow Cabinet members that they will be expected to campaign for a "no" vote, while allowing Tory MPs, including Kenneth Clarke, a free vote on the issue.

A referendum could also cause a dilemma for other pro-European Shadow Cabinet ministers who forced Mr Hague to retreat over his policy on the single currency.

The first serious rebellion to confront Mr Hague was staged on the eve of the conference by Sir George Young, shadow defence spokesman, (Stephen Dorrell (education and employment), Alastair Goodlad (international development) and Mr Curry.

They dug in their heels after being told the Shadow Cabinet had agreed to continue with the policy of ruling out entry to a single currency for 10 years. The decision was reached at a meeting last week of the Shadow Cabinet in the Salisbury home of Lord Cranborne, the Tory leader in the Lords, and a leading Euro-sceptic.

The four were absent from the meeting, and suspected the Euro-sceptics in the Shadow Cabinet were trying to bounce them into accepting a hard line against the euro. Mr Hague telephoned each of the four individually to explain the policy decision.

They had no time to consult each other, but each made it clear to Mr Hague that the "10-year" formula would be unacceptable. A compromise was lashed together over the weekend, with Mr Hague fixing the four Shadow Cabinet rebels with the wording of a new formula, that the Tories would oppose a single currency "for the foreseeable future".

Michael Howard, the party's foreign affairs spokesman and leader of the Euro-sceptics in Mr Hague's team, agreed to the wording, but was given the freedom, if pressed, to repeat the "10-year" formula underpinning it.

## SEEN & HEARD

"Choice brings progress. We can walk only when we allow one foot to move in front of the other. The other foot then catches up and passes it." Michael Portillo goes back to basics in a speech to party faithful.

"I like women so much I have even decided to marry one." William Hague at a reception for Conservative women.

On the agenda:

William Hague makes his big speech of the week. The conference ends at lunchtime.

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## Glasgow murderer's Maze transfer sparks anger

Until this week, 25-year-old Jason Campbell was simply known for a particularly nasty murder of a Catholic (UVF) football fan. Now his imminent move to a Ulster Volunteer Force wing of the Maze has caused outrage in Scotland and Ulster among those who claim that it gives his crime false political "credibility".

Two years ago Campbell slit the throat of 16-year-old Catholic and Celtic fan Mark Scotas he walked home past the Protestant Bridgeton area of Glasgow. The killer, whose uncle was a former UVF commander, was jailed for life. Despite apparent reluctance by the Scottish Office, Campbell's transfer to the relative luxury of a "political" wing of the Maze has been pushed by the Northern Ireland office as one of a number of so-called confidence-building measures in the current peace talks. Yesterday became clearer why. David Ervine, of the Progressive Unionist Party, which has close links with the UVF, said the group had been keen to establish that the Government appreciated their ceasefire as much as that of the IRA's. "[The UVF] put their list forward ... and demanded the Government act on it," he said. He condemned the murder but said the transfer would reassure paramilitaries.

The move has been widely condemned by Scottish churchmen and MPs. Labour MP George Galloway described Campbell as an evil cut-throat who had left his victim to "bleed to death ... because he was a Celtic supporter". The Scottish Office said it understood the public's "great concern" and insisted Campbell's life sentence would remain a matter for them. — Michael Streeter

## Listening in to spy talk

Code messages to Russia from Harry Pollitt, leader of the British Communist Party from the Twenties until the Cold War, were systematically deciphered by the British Security Services, according to government papers released yesterday by the Public Record Office in London. At the same time, Pollitt's personal secretary, Ann or "Olga" Grey, was one of the most valued agents of the Security Services and helped smash a Communist spy ring.

Thousands of the cryptic dispatches passing between the Moscow headquarters of the Communist International and its agents throughout Europe, including Pollitt and his acolyte the MP Willy Gallagher, have been released from 1934-37. Decoded by the government's Code and Cypher School, they used a coded alphabet taken from a book to give comrades directions on Kremlin policy, courier arrangements and notice of the arrival of funds for promoting revolution. — John Crossland

## Crayfish make for Skye

Plans to grow freshwater crayfish at Skye's only whisky distillery could give the phrase "a wee nip" a new meaning. A group of farmers is aiming to use the hot water and barley grains from Talisker malt production to produce fast-growing crayfish for the Scandinavian sea-food market. The shellfish grow to around four inches and look like small lobsters. Project leader Doug McLeod said: "The Finns have been trying to farm crayfish in ponds for years but the water freezes every winter. As a result the crayfish ... take up to seven years to reach market size." United Distillers, which owns the plant at Carbost in southwest Skye, has initially welcomed the plan, and has offered spent barley grains as food.

The main hurdle is getting Scottish Office approval. David Phillips, an invertebrate ecologist with Scottish Natural Heritage, says a licence is needed to keep non-native crayfish. Crayfish can cross dry land to reach fresh water and there is concern that they could escape as imported American signal crayfish have done. Mr McLeod plans to use European northern noble crayfish, which he says are "much more lethargic than their cousins". — Neil Davidson



Wordsmith: Roger McGough defying the traffic to read his work in Kensington High Street in London yesterday for National Poetry Day  
Photograph: Andrew Buurman

## Student reward for basic skills

The Government wants to make sure that sixth formers qualify in the key skills of communication, number and information technology so beloved of employers. Lucy Ward, Education Correspondent, finds there could be money in it for those who do.

Sixth formers who can prove their ability with words, numbers and computers could be rewarded with larger student loans when they go on to university under proposals being considered by the Government.

In an effort to encourage pupils to develop number, communication and information technology skills, still not formally required of A-level students, ministers have put forward a range of possible incentives or penalties, which indicates the seriousness with which key skills are being regarded. They include

offering an extra sum in loans to those who have qualified in key skills before university — a deal that may prove attractive to future students who will have to contribute towards tuition fees and cover their full living costs. Or key skills could be linked to A-level grading, preventing students gaining certain grades unless they had achieved a key skills qualification.

The proposals come in "Qualifying for Success", a government consultation paper on the future of post-16 qualifications, published yesterday.

The document, which also asks for views on the development of an overarching advanced certificate encompassing A-levels and general national vocational qualifications, stresses that key skills are not about setting right poor basic skills. It says: "They are about putting basic skills to work in new contexts to support the changes and transitions that are part of everyone's experience. People with a solid grounding in the key skills ... will have a head start in the workplace and beyond."

However, the National Union of Students

yesterday greeted the concept of financial rewards for key skills qualifications as "bewildering". A spokesman for the NUS, which is planning protests around the country next month over the proposed imposition of tuition fees, said: "We don't understand why people who are more qualified should get more money. It doesn't make any sense. Surely if extra money is available, it should be targeted on students from poorer families, not those who already have advantages."

Government sources stressed that financial incentives for students with good basic skills were "just one of a range of options".

A new qualification in key skills — covering "communication, application of number and IT" — is being piloted in some schools this year.

The latest consultation builds on a report on 16-19 qualifications published by former government curriculum advisor Sir Ron Dearing last year. After its election victory, the Labour government said it would postpone planned reforms amid fears rushed implementation could cause chaos.

## Straw rules out drugs inquiry

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, remained defiant yesterday and refused to set up a government inquiry into the decriminalisation of cannabis, despite pressure from the most senior judge in England and Wales. He said it would be "utterly irresponsible" to legalise soft drugs which lay behind a huge number of crimes.

His latest firm rejection came the day after the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham of Cornhill, suggested an independent look at the case for decriminalisation.

Mr Straw, who has repeatedly made clear his opposition to relaxing the drug laws or to setting up a Royal Commission to look at the issue, insisted that such moves would only increase the temptation of drugs for young people.

The Government had a "settled view" opposed to decriminalisation of soft drugs so there was no point setting up a Royal Commission which could cost up to £2.5m, he said.

## DAILY POEM

### Crossing to Østfold

by Paul Davidson

I  
She has let slip the familiarity of things,  
the kitchen window open onto grass,  
the lit summer cloud, meadowsweet; she has stepped

through the water's wake, the window's reflected patina  
into something darker, a looking-glass country, a messy  
billowing of copper and oilskin, seeped

green acrylic. She is looking up the names of plants  
and of colours: marigold, tickweed, slipperwort,  
crowfoot, chamomile, Scarborough lily.

II  
The house she dreams each night  
is still unfinished; it is ingrained with liver  
and creosote, a dull leadenness.  
The wind sludges through it.

Upstairs, the walls are rose-painted,  
overcast. She follows the drift of floorboards  
into unmapped territories, a consistency  
of sleep like oatmeal or mudflat.

There's the flicker of sleet  
from somewhere distant; the dilatory tick  
of a pine clock. She is being altered  
in stages, slowly learning to surface.

III  
She will wake soon to something uncertain;  
salt and red ochre, leached yellow light,  
a spirit level, turpentine thickening to glass

and nickel. This is the first palpable  
thing, the sluicing together of light  
and water, the sense of emplacement.

This poem by Paul Davidson from Barnstaple, Devon, has won the national poetry competition run by the 41 Onakers bookshops in conjunction with Faber & Faber. The winner was selected by the poet and biographer Andrew Motion.

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You may be lucky enough to be able to talk to someone in your family. Then again, you may be one of the large number of people who find talking to your nearest and dearest agonisingly embarrassing.

A girlfriend or boyfriend? If you can, great. But sometimes we don't want to expose our weaknesses to those who fancy us.

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the very problem you want to discuss. That's where The Samaritans can be useful. We're more discreet than your best mate, we'll listen as carefully as your girlfriend or boyfriend, and we're as sympathetic as your family. We're also non-judgemental, unshockable, and extremely experienced.

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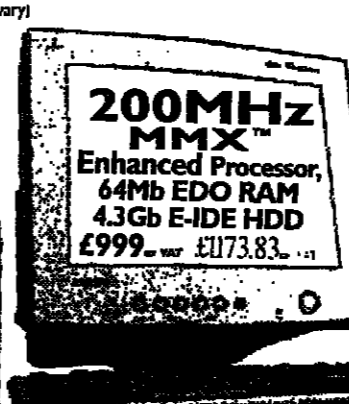
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Photograph: Massimo Rana/AP

The academy's choice triggered waves of delight among Fo's many admirers across the world. But, as Andrew Gumbel reports, the news was less well received by the Italian literary establishment.

"Sono esterrefatto". I'm gobsmacked. Such were Dario Fo's first words on hearing the extraordinary, utterly unexpected news that he had been elevat-

According to an account he gave to an Italian news agency reporter, the first Fo heard of the award was when a car drew up alongside him with a huge placard in the window reading "Dario, you've won the Nobel prize!" The story may not have been true, but it was an apt illustration of Fo's artistic preoccupations in a career spanning more than 40 years—comedy, surprise, and quick-witted improvisation.

Yesterday, the fusty humanaries of the literary establishment reacted to the news by denigrating him as a second-rate peddler of boulevard comedies, not a literary man at all. "I must be too old to understand," sighed Carlo Bo, 86-year-old doyen of Italy's pompous, wordy army of literary critics. "What does this mean? That everything changes, even literature has changed."

The right-wing intellectual Marcello Veneziani thought that the news must be one of Dario Fo's own jokes. "If this is really where we're at, then we can expect the next Nobel for literature to go to [the low-brow Italian comic] Paolo Villaggio and for poetry to Roberto Baggio," he remarked.

Italy has not won the Nobel Prize since 1975, when the laureate was the undisputed master of 20th-century poetry, Eugenio Montale. In recent years, the literati have been pinning their hopes on the Florentine poet Mario Luzi — one of those also-rans who, like Mario Vargas Llosa, Doris Lessing and VS Naipaul, seems condemned to be mentioned every year but never actually to win.

Yesterday, Luzi was in a uniquely foul mood. "I'll say only this," he told one Italian reporter before slamming the phone down, "I've just about had it up to here!" He sounds like one of those crazed characters you'd find in a Dario Fo play.

Play! All of them mingle agit-prop politics, linguistic provocation and stage techniques harking back to the Italian *commedia dell'arte* to create a great comic fresco of a society on the verge of madness. In its citation, the Swedish Academy said that he "emulates the jesters of the Middle Ages in scourging authority and upholding the dignity of the downtrodden ... With a blend of laughter and gravity he opens our eyes to abuses and injustices in society and also the wider historical perspective in which they can be placed".

What the academy was too polite to point out was the sheer fury that Fo inspires among his more staid Italian

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*Accidental Death of an Anarchist. 1970*

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# 12/TRANSPORT

## Tighter drinking limit ahead

The one-pint drink-drive limit came a step closer yesterday as European transport ministers discussed ways to cut the death toll on the Continent's roads. Katherine Butler in Brussels and Randeep Ramesh look at the reasons why the law will change.

British ministers yesterday signalled broad support for plans for a new European-wide drink-drive limit of 50 mg per 100 ml. The proposal, tabled by Neil Kinnock, the transport commissioner, is a key plank of a campaign to cut Europe's 45,000 annual road deaths.

The new level, dubbed "more than one and you're done", will mean drivers could safely sink only one pint of beer or two glasses of wine.

Officially the Government will only say that it is "looking at the proposal very seriously". But ministers pointed out that Tony Blair signalled his support indirectly for road safety schemes by praising the work of the former Labour transport minister Barbara Castle, who introduced the breathalyser 30 years ago.

The Prime Minister said the country owed a "huge debt" to Baroness Castle for the initiatives she pioneered to improve transport safety.



Driving test: Barbara Castle launching the first breathalyser 30 years ago

Although considerably lower than the present British limit of 80 mg per 100 ml, a maximum intake of 50 mg per 100 ml is already the mark permitted in France, Holland, Austria and Greece.

Britain has the lowest road accident death rate in the European Union: roads in the UK are seven times safer than in Greece - the country with the worst record. Welcoming the move from Brussels,

Gavin Strang, the transport minister, said it "dove-tailed neatly" with the Government's own commitment to road safety measures which may include a lower drink-driving limit.

Mr Kinnock is hoping that the reaction to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, will boost chances of agreement. Since Diana's death, he told ministers yesterday, 4,000 other Europeans have been

killed in road accidents, many of them drink related.

Motoring organisations remain unconvinced. David Worslett, a spokesman for the RAC, said: "Research suggests that the blood alcohol level in convictions for drink-drivers is almost 50 per cent higher than the legal limit. The real priority is to target these core offenders," said David Worslett, a spokesman for the RAC.

## Commuters pay the price for trains that run on time

Rail privatisation was supposed to ensure that train tickets would be capped at or below inflation. Randeep Ramesh, Transport Correspondent, explains why the legislative small print will mean that hundreds of thousands of commuters into London will face fare rises of up to 5.3 per cent.

Eight passenger train companies serving the capital have been given the go-ahead to raise fares 2 per cent above the July rate of inflation because they have bettered their performance targets.

"I think it is right for passengers who have seen a better service to pay more for it," said John O'Brien, the franchising director, who

oversees the passenger rail network.

But the move has incensed rail campaigners - who point out that the previous government had made great play of the promise that key fares would be "pegged" below or at inflation.

Last year, the then transport minister, John Watts, wrote to one concerned Tory colleague that "for three years from 1 January operators will not be able to increase key fares overall above the rate of inflation. Thereafter fares will be capped at 1 per cent below RPI for each of the next four years".

Companies that have the option of bringing in 5.3 per cent rises are North London Railways, Connex South Central, Thames and LTS (London Tilbury and Southend) railways.

In addition fares will be allowed to rise by 5.3 per cent on Connex South Eastern's Kent Coast routes, by up to 4.8

per cent on Great Eastern, and by 4.3 per cent on West Anglia Great Northern's "West Anglia" route.

Those services which have failed to meet the punctuality and reliability targets will be forced to reduce their fares. Passengers on South West Trains, who faced hundreds of cancellations a week earlier this year, will have below-inflation rises when the new fares are introduced in the New Year.

SWT's suburban routes will have fares of 2.5 per cent while the company's fare rise on long-distance routes will be only 1.3 per cent. The companies allowed to introduce above-inflation rises are the ones which performed above their targets between July 1995 to July 1997.

Thames Trains, which runs services from London to Surrey, Berkshire and Warwickshire, yesterday said it would not impose the extra increase.

"We have improved on our punctuality target of 92 per cent and we feel that this increase will not help grow our business," said a spokesman for the company.

Mr O'Brien said that train companies had the right not to impose the full rise - but would have an equivalent amount of cash lopped from their grant regardless. This will make it difficult for many train operators not to implement the rise. Great Eastern will lose £1.3m and Connex South Central will miss £1.6m from its grant if they do not increase fares.

Jonathan Bray, co-ordinator for pressure group Save Our Railways, said: "Promises to passengers have been broken. Ministers in the last government promised there would not be above-inflation rises. There may have been details of the London commuter route rises in the small print of rail privatisation but very few people knew about it."

## Plan for rail league tables flawed

The rail regulator's plan to introduce league tables which would rate operators on the accuracy and impartiality of their customer information has foundered because of "flaws" in the investigation.

Earlier this year John Swift QC, the rail regulator sent hundreds of researchers out to pose as passengers and identify the apparent failure of train operators to furnish travellers with "correct" train information.

More than 5,000 inquiries at booking offices and via passengers' phone lines were made by investigators to check how

far sales staff provided information about alternative routes and ticket prices. By June, Mr Swift was confidently predicting that the results would be released in "a few weeks".

Three months later and there is little sign of his office producing any tables. In fact, officials cannot promise the results will be out by November adding that "it takes time to validate the methodology".

The problem for Mr Swift is that his investigators have unwittingly asked the wrong questions. Train operators, who feared that the study may un-

cover serious irregularities, have had a field day overturning the regulator's results.

First, there was the use of English. Train firms pointed out that when a "customer" asked for the "fastest train to London", booking clerks were entitled to offer the next available ride to London - which would arrive before the quickest service. Mr Swift backed down.

Another problem arose when researchers asked for the cheapest fare - they marked down companies who did not offer Apex tickets. But operators pointed out that when

these advance fares are sold out clerks have no option but to offer Supersaver tickets.

Mr Swift has also been forced to concede that many of the investigators were inadequately informed and were unaware that on certain days where because of high demand there are restrictions placed on tickets by operators. With the results now likely to be released more than 10 months after the first investigation, train companies will argue that Mr Swift's study does not reflect today's privatised network.

— Randeep Ramesh

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## Britain calls for US action on climate

Climate change threatens to swamp small Pacific Islands. But industrial countries are fighting shy of the action needed to prevent it. America, Australia and Japan must do more, argues Derek Fatchett, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

I have recently returned from the Pacific. Not the newly industrialised Pacific Rim which dominates the financial pages, but the heart of the region - the small island states of the South Pacific.

For us in Britain, climate change and global warming might seem remote. For those living in the South Pacific islands, the issue is literally one of survival.

The question there is not whether grapes might grow in the Peninsules. It is simply and starkly: "will my country exist in fifty years time?" This was brought home to me very sharply in Rarotonga, the hotel I stayed in would be one of the first buildings to disappear as the sea rises.

I was there for the Conference of the South Pacific Forum States. You would think at least in that context you would find a sense of urgency and purpose about climate change. Indeed the smallest and most vulnerable islands, who risk losing their coastal plains or even their very existence, had it at the top of their agenda. It was the response of their developed country partners which was so disturbing.

In eight weeks time the nations of the world will meet in Kyoto to decide how we will take the first steps to prevent potentially catastrophic climate change. The EU has proposed a 15 per cent reduction by developed countries of the gases which cause the greenhouse effect by 2010. The UK has set it-



Life in the Cook Islands is threatened by global warming, which could lead to a rise in the sea level

Photograph: Robert Harding Picture Library

self a domestic target of a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide. It is not an easy target, but it is not one which will require major changes in lifestyle or industrial technology. At the very worst it may have a marginal effect on economic growth. At best it may stimulate new environmental technologies and industries and create new growth.

The response by some of our western partners has been disappointing to say the least. The Japanese have just published their proposals, under which developed countries as a whole would be required to

achieve emissions reductions of around three per cent. Whilst it's welcome that the Japanese are now talking about hard numbers, three per cent is too low to be a credible response. But at least we now have something to negotiate about.

Meanwhile, we hope the US position will emerge soon following this week's meeting at the White House. The Administration's heart is in the right place. But it will have to work hard to overcome the doubts in Congress and elsewhere, where many refuse even to recognise there is a problem. But in the Pacific, where the

problems caused by global warming will be most keenly felt, the response has been more disappointing. While the rest of us discuss reductions in emissions, the Australian government talks about increases. Measures to cut emissions are seen as too costly or difficult.

I find it hard to believe that Australia, one of the richest countries in the world with an average emissions level second only to the US, cannot do better than this.

Here in Britain, we have already reduced our emissions from 1990 levels and meet the commitments we signed at Rio.

To go beyond this to achieve our 20 per cent target will require further efforts in areas like transport, domestic energy efficiency, power generation and industrial processes. We are preparing our strategy to announce next year.

We are also sharing our thinking with the Australian Government. What is needed is the political will to explain to the public why action must be taken and ask them to do the right thing. If I know the Australian people, I am sure they will respond.

Tony Blair sent a strong message to leaders at the June

UN Environment Meeting. He said that we would be failing our children if we did not tackle climate change. Some of the key countries have so far turned a deaf ear. I urge them to listen to the concerns of the small vulnerable states represented at the South Pacific Forum.

Some of the poorest people in other large developing countries, like India, China and Bangladesh will also be affected by rising sea levels. Large parts of Africa may be affected by regular droughts. This is a major test for the post cold-war world order. Real political leadership is needed.

## Fears that overfishing will destroy the Med

Environmental groups yesterday urged action to prevent a catastrophic collapse in Mediterranean fisheries stocks. They want a new fisheries body to adopt urgent measures to sustain fish populations and save what a traditional industry threatened with extinction.

Greenpeace and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) told a news conference in Athens that they had rallied another 39 non-governmental groups to push for tougher measures from the General Fisheries Council of the Mediterranean (GFCM) meeting in Rome on Monday.

"We want urgent decisions now, there is no time to waste," Nikos Charalambidis of Greenpeace said. "Fishing reserves in the Black Sea have collapsed and will never recover. Those fishing fleets are now fishing in the Mediterranean."

The GFCM, which for decades has made non-binding recommendations, will decide at the Rome meeting whether to adopt control mechanisms to enforce its decisions. All Mediterranean countries and the European Commission participate in the group.

"Their recommendations have not been bad but have been ineffective because it has been up to the various governments to enforce them," Charalambidis said. "GFCM must decide to form its own control mechanisms before it's too late."

Environmentalists said that chaotic fishing is threatening to deplete fish reserves and destroy the Mediterranean's traditional fishing communities. "According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, 18 to 40 tonnes of fish caught are thrown back. This is about 40 per cent of the catch," said WWF international Mediterranean fisheries coordinator Demetris Karavellas.

Countries faced with dwindling fish populations tend to extend their fishing territories and subsidise fishermen instead of banning destructive fishing methods and giving over-fished areas time to recover, he said. "From 1983 to 1990 the European Union has raised fishing subsidies from \$80 to \$500 million despite the fact that the European fishing fleet is 40 per cent bigger than European reserves can sustain," Charalambidis said.

— Reuter

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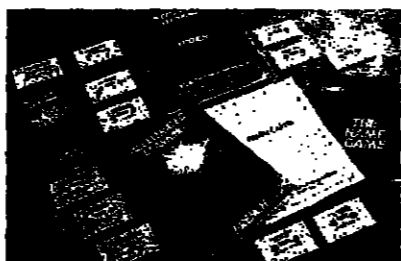
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## Yeltsin denies he wants a third term in Kremlin

A week after spiriting up a storm of speculation by being coy, Boris Yeltsin yesterday went into sharp reverse, denying that he had any intention of seeking a third term in the Kremlin.

The President said that he would not put himself forward as a candidate for the presidential elections in 2000, adding that he hopes the job will go to a "young and energetic, battling democrat".

His remarks appear to be an effort to end the persistent will-he-won't-he debate that has already begun in Moscow, nearly three years before the nation is due to go to the polls.

In Strasbourg for a Council of Europe summit, Mr Yeltsin, 66, said he was guarantor of the Russian constitution, which was passed after a controversial 1993. This limits a president to two terms.

Whether Mr Yeltsin's words will be believed by many Russians seems doubtful. There is a general tendency to distrust all politicians, and particularly those who appear to them to protest too much. Any limits imposed by the constitution are seen as irrelevant as it is still widely ignored and violated. Mr Yeltsin is also famously given to abrupt changes of tack.

The president's remarks may cheer his opponents in the parliament who are threatening to hold a vote of no-confidence in the administration as a protest against its 1998 budget. However, the issue is not the constant wrangling between President and parliament, but the struggle that will ensue among the ruling elite to find a replacement who will protect their huge assets and interests.

— Phil Reeves



golden harvest: Children in Huairoun, north of Peking, celebrate the bringing in of the corn crop, which was hailed a success this year, despite drought in many provinces

Photograph: Reuters

## Prodi steps down, with rancour

Unable to hold its parliamentary majority together and get the country's finances into shape for European monetary union, Italy's precarious centre-left government finally collapsed yesterday, leaving an unholy political mess.

Andrew Gumbel says it may yet jeopardise the country's chances of joining the single currency.

agreement, it is you who have acted superficially and arrogantly."

On hearing this twisted version of events, Mr Prodi wasted no time in announcing he was on his way to the presidential palace to resign. The luminaries on the government benches sat aghast, scarcely believing that the left's first experience of power in Italy since the Second World War should end in this petty, rancorous manner. As the parliamentary session broke up, there were emotional embraces and some open weeping.

Rifondazione has proved a fatal weakness for the government ever since Mr Prodi and his team took office 17 months ago. But this was perhaps the worst possible timing for a political crisis, since Italy was on the verge of winning the battle to be admitted to the European mainstream and join the single currency in the first wave.

Everything is now thrown open to question. President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro is likely to reject Mr Prodi's resignation, or else try to form a new provisional government that can push the budget.

The main party of the outgoing government, the PDS, wants to hold elections immediately. The powerful foreign minister and centrist leader Lamberto Dini, meanwhile, is in favour of forging a new majority that would not be dependent on Rifondazione and would take in elements of the Christian Democrat centre-right.

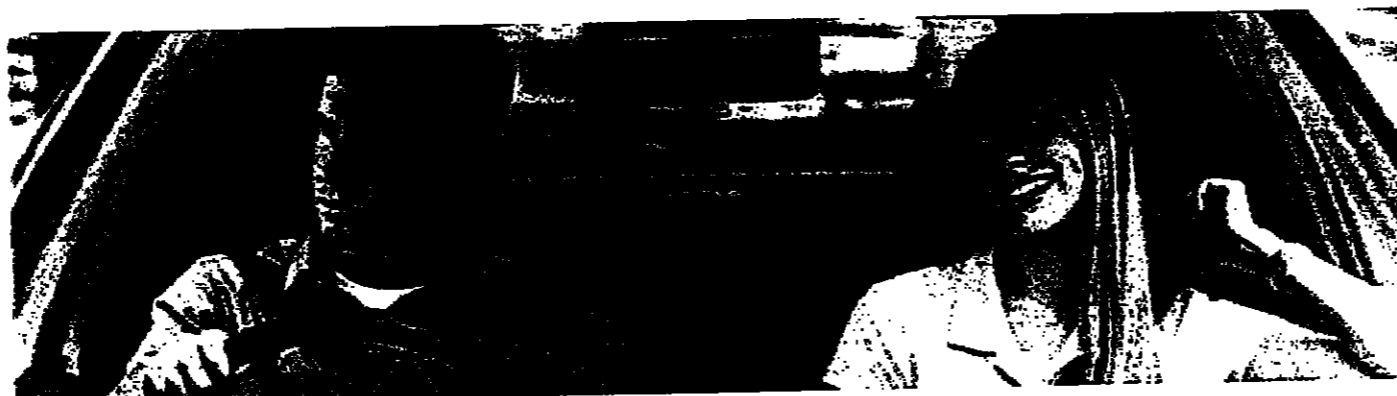
The longer the crisis goes on, the more distant the dream of Europe is likely to become. "Prodi... is destined to end like Moses, who died before he could reach the promised land," observed the right-wing deputy Giulio Macerati.

After more than a week of fruitless negotiations and last-minute deal-broking, Italy's Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, finally gave up the struggle just after 3.30 yesterday afternoon. Despite concessions on health, on employment, on shorter working hours, and on pensions, there was nothing he could do to stop the small far-left party Rifondazione Comunista from opposing his budget package for next year and plunging the country into crisis.

He had tried once on Tuesday, with an impassioned speech to the Chamber of Deputies where Rifondazione holds the balance of power. And his team tried again all Wednesday night, looking for common ground where in reality no common ground existed because of the intransigent Rifondazione leadership.

"We have no choice but to vote against this budget," ran the conclusion of a withering speech by Rifondazione's Oliviero Diliberto. "You were the ones who did not want to compromise, you were ones who didn't want to reach an

to hell with it,  
that'll do



well done!  
fourth time lucky!

come on,  
it was pretty tight

yep, it was an amazing display of  
sheer parking genius.

I didn't want to  
scuff the wheels, actually

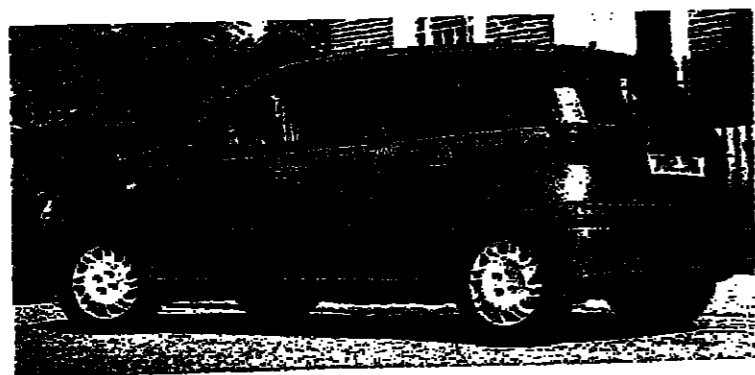
o.k. see you later then

sorry?

if I'm not at the kerb in  
15 minutes, go on without me



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### Bardot fined for racist jibe

A French court convicted Brigitte Bardot of inciting racial hatred, fined her 10,000 francs (£900) and ordered her to pay a symbolic franc to human rights groups that sued her.

The 63-year-old former screen siren and animal rights campaigner was taken to court again for criticising the Muslim ritual slaughter of sheep, after a court acquitted her. Bardot was sued for her commentary in *Le Figaro* in April 1996, in which she attacked the four-day Eid al-Adha spring festival.

Married to a member of the anti-immigrant National Front, she complained of "foreign overpopulation" and that the slaughter was "torture, signs of the most atrocious pagan sacrifices". The Movement Against Racism and for Friendship of People said the court ruling "honours justice and dishonours the woman who was the symbol of a certain image of France."

### Pauline pounds Acapulco

Hurricane Pauline pounded Mexico's Pacific coast yesterday dumping torrential rains on Acapulco that turned streets to raging rivers of deadly debris and left at least 15 people dead. Dozens of people were reported missing after torrents swept hundreds of cars, tree trunks and tons of mud down from mountains.

### HK children face deportation

Thousands of mainland-born children face deportation from Hong Kong after a court rejected a legal challenge to an immigration law. Five children claimed a law introduced after Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule contravened the territory's constitution.

The Basic Law guarantees right of abode to the tens of thousands of mainland-born children of Hong Kong residents, but the new legislation dictated they must prove their status before arriving in the territory.

The offspring must now also obtain a one-way permit from the Chinese authorities to enter Hong Kong, which lawyers for the children said can take years.

### Levy hints at resignation

The Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said that he may resign because of his troubled relations with Benjamin Netanyahu, and suggested his health had suffered because of the tension with the prime minister. Mr Levy told Israel Radio he was not consulted about the decision to order Israeli agents to assassinate an Islamic leader in Jordan, and that he would have opposed the plan.

### Short pledges £5m to Rwanda

Britain is to donate a further £5m to help Rwanda. Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, on a tour of East Africa, said it would boost work already under way with British funding in education, justice and revenue collection.

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# The Scooter, the Squid and a political murder

A new book suggests that one of the most senior centre-right French politicians, François Léotard, organised the murder of a parliamentary colleague three years ago. An incandescent Mr Léotard says that he is the victim of a plot by elements in a rival but allied right-wing party: President Chirac's RPR.

John Lichfield unravels an explosive tale of murder, political corruption, mafia money-laundering, secret services, dirty tricks and journalistic ethics.

Yann Piat was murdered. That much is clear. She was shot in her Renault Clio close to her home near Toulon in February 1994. At the time she was a UDF (centre-right) deputy for the Var, the département which stretches along the Mediterranean coast from the eastern suburbs of Marseille almost as far as Cannes. The Var is, by common consent, the most ethnically challenged département in France.

Ms Piat, who had previously been a deputy for the far-right National Front, was investigating links between criminals and politicians. According to the official version of events, she was murdered by two local hoodlums. According to an incendiary book just published by two French journalists, she was murdered by secret service agents on the orders of two of the most senior members of her own party: the then defence minister and head of the UDF,

François Léotard, and the mayor of Marseilles, and head of the regional assembly, Jean-Claude Gaudin.

The book - *The Yann Piat Affair: Assassins at the Heart of Government* - mentions neither man by name. It describes them as two nationally known politicians, who had the defence ministry code names of L'Encre (the squid) and Trinité (the scooter). From hints and circumstantial evidence, it is clear to everyone who reads the book who the accused really are. But not, it seems, to the authors. They insist, rather disingenuously, that they have no idea of the identity of the two politicians whom they accuse of murder.

The other evidence in the book is also a little thin. Much of the information is sourced to an unnamed "general" in the military security agency. A senior military officer interviewed by defence ministry investigators yesterday as part of an inquiry ordered by the Socialist defence minister, Alain Richard. According to one report, the deep throat (or *gorge profonde*) is not a general but a naval captain, who was thrown out of the military security agency for embezzlement. Even *Libération*, a centre-left newspaper which might have been expected to enjoy the book, dismissed the work yesterday as a "far-fetched hypothesis... unsupported by any kind of beginnings of proof."

The authors - André Rougemont of the investigative newspaper *Le Canard Enchaîné* and Jean-Michel Verne, great-grandson of the writer Jules Verne - say that they are merely raising questions which deserve to be investigated more thoroughly. They say that Ms Piat had assembled evidence, including photographs, linking the two un-



François Léotard: Claims he is the victim of 'secret political cells' trying to smear his reputation by implicating him in the killing

Photograph: UPP

named politicians with the Italian mafia. They believe that the pair were preparing to sell off disused military sites on the Mediterranean coast to the mafia as part of a money-laundering exercise.

The "squid" counter-attacked spectacularly this week. Mr Léotard, who is also mayor of Fréjus in the Var, said he was the latest victim of "secret political cells", which had been operating in France for 20

or 30 years, trying to "dishonour and dirty" French democracy.

Although Mr Léotard did not spell it out, every commentator in France took this as an attack on elements in the neo-Gaullist party, the RPR, founded by President Jacques Chirac. In particular, it was seen as an attack on an old foe of Mr Léotard, a former secret service agent called Jean-

Charles Marchiani, who was installed as prefect (chief national government officer) in the Var by Chirac in 1995. Mr Marchiani, who has friendly relations with the far-right National Front, is suspected, without obvious proof, of being another leading source for the Piat book.

Why should the RPR want to destroy, Mr Léotard and Mr Gaudin, their nominal allies? In the regional elections next March there will be a vicious struggle for the pres-

idency of the Provence-Côte d'Azur region. Jean-Marie Le Pen himself will run for the National Front. Mr Léotard has announced his intention of running for the UDF. The RPR thinks it has the better chance of beating Mr Le Pen. It would certainly have a much better chance if Mr Léotard was disabled. However, the vicious recriminations over the Piat affair will now, inevitably, bring most aid and comfort to the NF.

## Papon should not be in jail during war crimes trial, say doctors

Two doctors recommended yesterday that Maurice Papon, the Vichy official on trial in Bordeaux for crimes against humanity, should sleep in hospital, not in jail, until the case ends.

The court delayed a decision on the recommendation until today. Mr Papon, who is 87 and suffering from acute angina, spent his third night in a 10-square prison cell last night. On Wednesday his lawyers warned that he could die during the trial unless he was allowed his freedom.

Mr Papon, a former French budget minister and Paris police chief, is accused of organising the arrest and deportation of 1,558 Jewish men, women and children from the Bordeaux area between 1942 and 1944.

He does not deny the basic facts but says he played a minor role in policies which were outside his control. The prosecution says that he pursued the policy energetically and ruthlessly, to prove his worth as an administrator; in other words, out of careerism.

The second day of the trial yesterday was taken up mostly by declarations and submissions from Mr Papon's principal lawyer, Jean-Marc Varaut.

He called for the proceedings to be abandoned on the grounds that they were "inequitable" and contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Contrary to what had been reported in the press, Mr Varaut said, Maurice Papon did feel a sense of "grief" for the events of this "terrible period" when it was "harder to know one's duty than to follow it."

Because of his post at the time - secretary general to the police chief in Bordeaux - and because of his sense of duty, Papon became involved in the "via dolorosa" of the Holocaust, against his better judgement.

Since discovering what really happened to the Jews he helped to deport, "the knowledge has brought him acute pain," Mr Varaut said.

Earlier doctors Stéphane Chapenot and Jean-Paul Broustet reported to the court that the seriousness of Mr Papon's heart condition, the poor medical facilities in jail and the likely length of the trial (11 weeks) made it desirable that he be kept in hospital. Mr Varaut said that even this was unsatisfactory: Mr Papon should be given his freedom.

The accused sat in court, following the proceedings closely and taking notes with a fountain pen. Despite his work for the Vichy French government, which collaborated with Nazism, Mr Papon thrived after the war, rising to budget minister in 1981 before his past caught up with him.

— John Lichfield

## Murder suspect's flight to Israel stumps US police

Israel is refusing to extradite 17-year-old Samuel Sheinbein to the US, where he is accused of murdering another teenager and cutting off his arms and legs with a circular saw before burning the body.

Patrick Cockburn in Jerusalem reports on the bizarre turn of the murder case which has angered the Americans.

The case against Samuel Sheinbein is simple. Police in Rockville, Maryland, just outside Washington, want to arrest him for murdering Alfredo Tello, 19, whose burnt and limbless body was discovered in the garage of a vacant house on 17 September. The police say they have evidence that Mr Sheinbein had access to the house next door and may be linked, through a receipt found near the body, with the purchase of a new circular saw.

The problem is that within three days of the murder, Mr Sheinbein fled to Israel where he is automatically a citizen because his father was born in

Palestine, as it was then called, in 1944, and only emigrated to the United States in 1950.

Madeline Albright, the US Secretary of State, has asked for "maximum co-operation" from Israel in extraditing the teenager, who is in a psychiatric hospital after taking a non-life threatening drug overdose. Israel has offered, as an alternative, to put him on trial itself.

But prosecutors in Maryland say they doubt if witnesses would fly half round the world to give evidence in a court in Tel Aviv.

Mr Sheinbein's claim to the protection of the Israeli state is a little slender since he had never lived in the country and the government hopes to get off the hook by having his citizenship ruled invalid. But, in the meantime, US congressmen are even threatening to cut aid to Israel until Mr Sheinbein is extradited.

The motive for the crime is a mystery. Mr Sheinbein, a lanky teenager who towers over the Israeli police, has affluent parents and was said to be studying hard for his exams. Also accused of the murder is Benjamin Needle, 17, who is said by his parents to be addicted to marijuana and alcohol and to have spent time in a psychiatric hospital.

On 16 September the two teenagers are said to have met with a third, "Freddie" Tello, who worked in a tropical fish shop in Rockville, Montgomery county. "A guy in a green Firebird pulled up; there were two of them in the car," Adam Moore, another employee in the store, told reporters. "Freddie was in a pretty good mood. The other two looked kind of bored."

It is not clear what happened next. Eyewitnesses say they saw the two accused struggling with a garden cart later found near the body. A trail of blood leads from the Sheinbeins' garage to the street. Freddie Tello's dismembered body was found the next day. He was finally identified from dental records. Benjamin Needle was arrested, but Samuel Feinstein disappeared and flew to Israel. Samuel's father, Sol, and brother, Robert, followed him to Israel, where they were arrested by police who said they had assisted his flight and were disrupting the investigation.

US prosecutors are aghast. "It's our murder," Robert Dean, the Montgomery county state attorney, told the *Washington Post* newspaper. "What we much prefer is having Mr Sheinbein return and be held accountable under American law."

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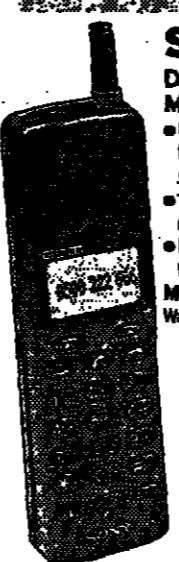
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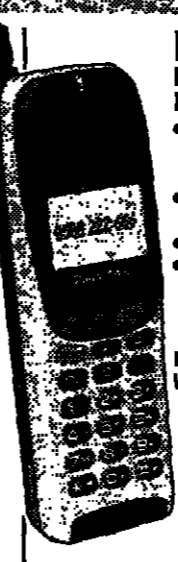
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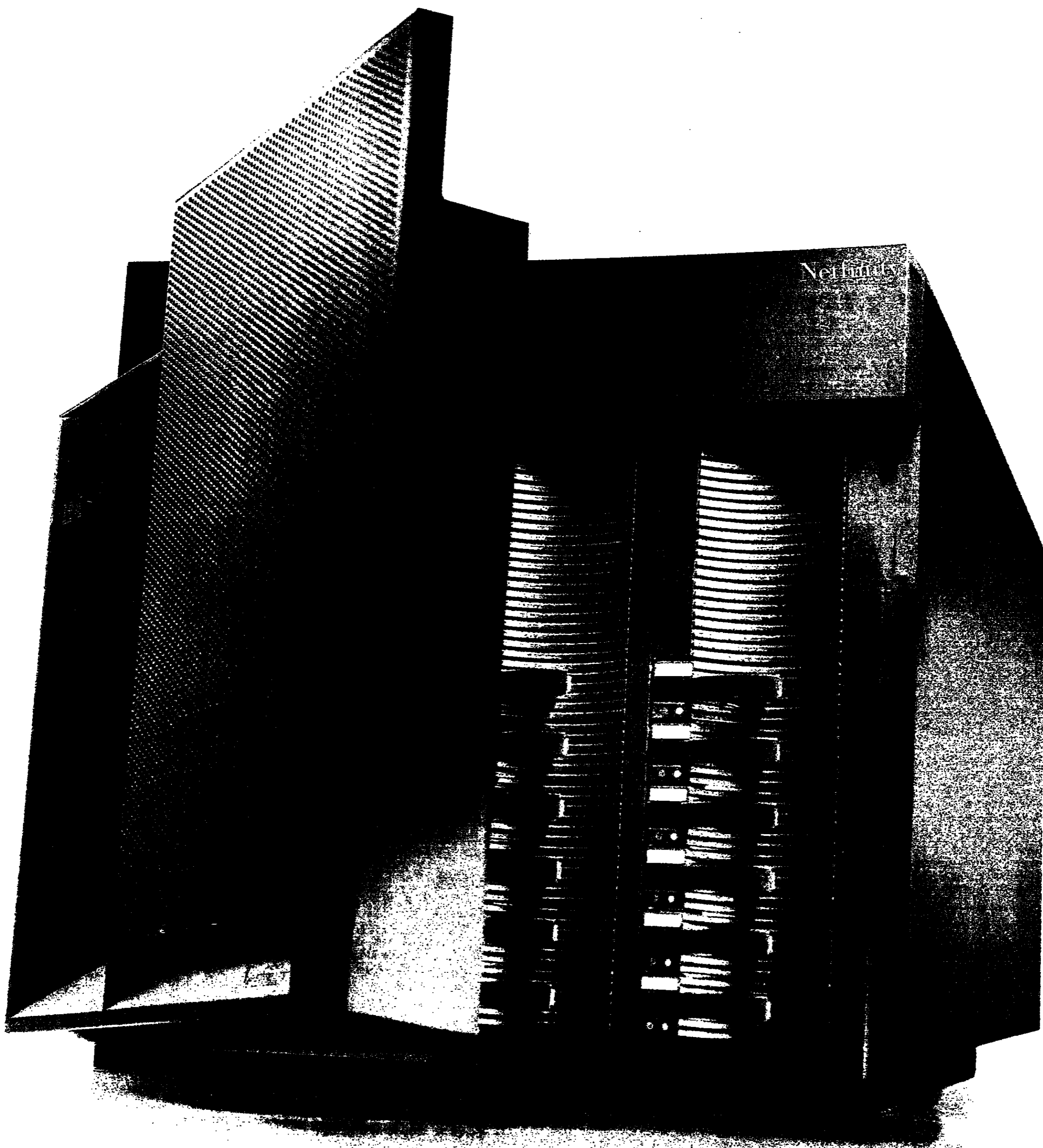
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## Heart surgeons face misconduct charges

On Monday three doctors are to appear before the General Medical Council in what is being billed as the most important medical disciplinary case of the decade. The outcome of the case, and the Government inquiry which is to follow it, could change the way surgical practice is regulated in Britain.

Two surgeons, James Wisheart (now retired) and Janardan Dhasmana, and Dr John Roylance, former chief executive of the United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust, will appear before the council's professional conduct committee on charges relating to heart surgery in children. The council has cleared four months to hear the case compared with the two to three days for routine professional conduct cases.

Between 1988 and 1995, children operated on for congenital heart defects at Bristol Royal Infirmary's paediatric cardiology department had a higher than expected death rate. Some were left brain damaged and four are now suing the hospital trust for damages. The article on this page

tells the story of those years. The GMC case is being described as the biggest since the kidneys-for-sale scandal in the mid-1980s, although the issues are very different. In that case two doctors were struck off the medical register for paying young Turkish men to donate their kidneys to rich private patients. The donors were flown to Britain for the operation and claimed they did not know what was happening to them.

The detailed charges against the three doctors in the present case will not be known until it begins on Monday. The GMC's professional conduct committee has no power to investigate the clinical competence of the doctors, but must confine itself to ethical issues such as what the parents were told about the risks of the proposed surgery. The doctors deny misconduct.

Last March, Stephen Dorrell, then secretary of state for health, ordered an inquiry into the heart surgery service for children at the infirmary after an independent review criticised Mr Wisheart's "poor" surgical performance. Mr Dor-

rell said that the inquiry should run after the GMC had concluded its investigation.

Mr Wisheart, who announced his retirement from the NHS 24 hours before the review was published, said then: "I have served patients in the South-west for 22 years and given my all to them. No surgeon has been subjected to the scrutiny I have endured. This review has been breaking new ground and the whole issue of standards... is a difficult one."

The British Medical Journal says in an editorial on the case that a punitive approach to quality may occasionally be necessary to protect public safety but "big sticks" alone are not enough to improve health care. It believes a more systematic, incremental approach led by doctors is needed. It is well known that the performance of individual surgeons varies widely. Many surgeons will watch the unfolding events at the GMC over the next four months and wonder "There, but for the grace of God..."

— Jeremy Lawrence  
Health Editor



Bitter memories: Helen Rickard with a photograph of her 11-month-old daughter Samantha, who died during heart surgery at Bristol Royal Infirmary in February 1991. Photograph: Christopher Jones

## Routine operations brought tragic results

Heart surgery on children at Bristol Royal Infirmary now has one of the best outcomes in the country. But, as *Elisabeth Winkler* reports, just five years ago it had one of the worst, according to a report by the then President of the Royal College of Surgeons.

In 1988, when Dr Steve Bolsin became consultant anaesthetist at Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI) he soon noticed that major heart operations on children were lasting up to three times longer than similar operations he had attended at the Royal Brompton in London – the longer the operation, the higher the risks – and that children undergoing relatively routine operations were dying. Statistics for 1988-89 appeared to suggest that the mortality of Bristol children's heart surgery was twice the national average.

Dr Bolsin was asked by the hospital's Professor of Anaesthesia, Professor Cedric Prys-Roberts, to produce a detailed audit of children's heart surgery over the next two years. The results, made available in 1993, showed the disturbingly high mortality rate for surgery to correct heart defects (A-

V Canal procedure). In 1991, Helen Rickard and her partner, Andy, handed over their 11-month-old daughter Samantha to the care of James Wisheart, the hospital's most senior paediatric cardiac surgeon. He was also medical director of one of the NHS's largest trusts and chairman of the hospital management committee – in other words, his own boss.

Samantha was about to become the first of six A-V Canal operations (out of a series of seven) to end fatally. "Mr Wisheart drew us a diagram explaining the operation," said Ms Rickard, now 30. He was very quietly spoken and non-threatening. I felt drawn in by him – I thought he was wonderful. Samantha went down to the operating theatre at 8am on 3 February 1991. At 2pm, her parents were told by a liaison nurse that they were having difficulty getting her off the by-pass machine and that the patches (used to repair the holes in her heart) needed to be removed and put back on again.

"At 4.00pm we were told that the surgeon couldn't get her trying? When will they know when to stop? The liaison nurse answered, 'oh, the surgeons are very good, they know what to do'. I replied, 'they might as well take her off the by-pass machine – she's gone'. I knew instinctively that she had died. Samantha died at 6.10pm. In the meantime Andy and I were going frantic. Wisheart came up and began talking but I broke in saying 'she's dead', and he nodded. I screamed 'no, no'. Even as I was screaming there was a voice in my head saying, 'Helen, be quiet, this poor guy is trying to speak to you'. But I couldn't stop.

"The next two years were a nightmare and my relationship with Andy was destroyed. We were both leaning on someone bent double with their own pain. We had another child, Ben, but Andy never came to terms with Samantha's death. Just before the second anniversary of her death, Andy committed suicide. If I knew then what I know now both my daughter and husband might still be alive."

In 1992, Mr Janardan Dhasmana started doing switch operations, a procedure for unscrambling the major arteries. Of the 13 babies having switch operations, nine died. The mortality rates at Bristol for switch was 67 per cent. The GMC is investigating Mr Dhasmana's switch operations.

In July 1993, six cardiac anaesthetists wrote to ask for a formal review of the switch programme to be undertaken in view of the recent deaths of children undergoing the operation. This never took place.

In 1993, the Department of Health was informed of the situation in Bristol both by Dr Bolsin and Professor John Fardon, the professor of surgery. The department had funded the United Bristol Healthcare Trust £2m for paediatric cardiac surgery in 1992. Dr Peter Doyle, senior medical officer at the Department of Health, asked the cardiac surgery department in Bristol to prepare a report. The report recommended the cessation of the switch programme and the appointment of a new children's heart surgeon.

In December 1994, a switch operation was listed for 18-month-old Joshua Love-day, to be performed by Mr Dhasmana. As late as the evening of the operation, there was a meeting to decide whether the operation should go ahead. It decided that it should. The operation took place the next day. Joshua died on the operating table.

In response, an external report was commissioned into Bristol paediatric cardiac services and at a meeting to discuss the report Mr Wisheart was described as a "higher risk surgeon". He carried out one more operation which ended in a fatality. On 1 May 1995, the day that the new surgeon, Mr Ash Pawade, took up his post in Bristol, Mr Wisheart undertook a non-emergency operation on an 18-month-old boy. During the operation the boy suffered severe brain damage and died a month later.

Ms Rickard, who is part of a parents' pressure group, Informed Consent, said: "NHS consumers have a right to know about a surgeon's operating record."

Later that year in November 1995, Mr Wisheart received the A Merit Award for services to cardiac surgery. This NHS incentive bonus is worth about £35,000 each year. In the same year Dr Bolsin left the country with his family and now works in Australia. Mr Wisheart then turned to adult cardiac surgery. An independent inquiry, published in March 1997, found his adult mortality rate was four times higher than other surgeons in the unit. Shortly before the report was published, Mr Wisheart stepped down as medical director and retired from operating. Mr Wisheart describes himself as a man devoted to his work. He has said: "I've served the patients of the West Country for 22 years, literally body and soul."

As it prepares to start proceedings on Monday, questions are being asked as to whether the General Medical Council, the doctors' own watchdog, is the best place to investigate what William Waldegrave, the former Bristol MP, called in a letter: "The BRI cardiac disaster."

Laurence Vick, of Tozers solicitors in Exeter, Devon, is representing 21 of the families in law suits against the United Bristol Healthcare Trust; seven of the cases are children who survived but were brain damaged. Mr Vick has sought leave to apply for a judicial review to have the GMC's powers reviewed in the High Court. "We have been very concerned about the lack of information and secrecy surrounding the GMC process," he said.

In a preliminary hearing this week, it was made clear that the GMC will not be looking at cases where children survived operations but with serious brain damage, regardless of the quality of life afterwards. "The way things stand at the moment," said the father of one of these children, now a four-year-old boy who now cannot hear, see or speak, "My son is counted as a success."



James Wisheart: Devoted worker. Photograph: SVN

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## To the manor born. Then the National Trust took over



Above: Sarah Jewell in front of the restored Chastleton House. As a child, her grandfather Alan Clutton-Brock would shuffle down the long drive, puffing on his pipe and unlock the gates to let her and her family in. Below right: 16-year-old Sarah, top, together with her sisters in 1976, standing on the front steps

Photography: John Lawrence

Chastleton House had been in the family of Sarah Jewell since it was built in 1610. Then, in 1991, unable to afford its upkeep, her grandmother sold it off to the National Trust. Last week she returned for the first time to her childhood playground as a member of the public.

When I was a child I always wanted to have a party in the Long Gallery of Chastleton House in Oxfordshire. It is the most beautiful room I have ever seen, with the longest barrel-vaulted ceiling in England, and I wanted to show it off to my friends and to dance up and down on the creaking floorboards as my ancestors had done.

I never did have a party in the Long Gallery but I got married in the 12th-century church next to the house and had a magnificent wedding reception at Chastleton. A huge log fire roared in the Great Hall and the whole room hummed with excitement as we danced and laughed under the beady eyes of my forebears, whose portraits line the walls.

I was the last direct descendant of Walter Jones – the wealthy wool merchant who

built the house in 1610 – to get married at Chastleton. Two years after my wedding, in 1991, the house was sold to the National Trust by my grandmother, Barbara Clutton-Brock. The Trust has spent the last six years restoring and renovating the house and it has just been reopened. Last week I returned for the first time to see what changes have been made.

As I drove into the new National Trust car park I felt choked with unexpected emotion. Throughout my childhood my parents had always driven me and my sisters straight up to the imposing wrought iron gates of the house, and we watched with excitement as my grandfather, Alan Clutton-Brock, shuffled down the drive, puffing on his pipe, to unlock them and let us in. Now I was a member of the public, like everyone else, with

no preferential treatment.

I walked from the car park through the dovecote field towards the house and was shocked to see a Union Jack flying from one of the turrets. That was something my grandparents would certainly never have approved of. They lived unostentatiously in bohemian disorder in their imposing Jacobean country manor. But the National Trust staff and volunteers were extremely welcoming and the first thing that struck me on entering the Great Hall was how clean it looked. Gone were the cobwebs and the thick layers of dust and the piles of books and envelopes that seemed to cover every surface.

My grandfather, who inherited Chastleton in 1955, was an artist and Slade professor of fine art at Cambridge and was more concerned with his

painting or reading than keeping the house tidy. Added to this he had very little money. Looking after Chastleton and paying for its upkeep imposed a crippling financial burden which no generation since the time of Walter Jones had been able to cope with. That is why the house is such a Jacobean treasure; nobody ever had enough money to alter its structure or contents. Sixteenth century Flemish tapestries and 17th-century "flamethick" hangings still adorn the walls in the bedrooms, and huge 18th-century pewter plates line the walls of the kitchen.

When I was a child it was always exciting to explore the house. My sisters and I used to love running around searching for the secret room where Arthur Jones, the grandson of Walter Jones, hid after the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

Arthur was a Royalist and had been fighting for Charles II but the troops were defeated by Cromwell and Arthur galloped back to Chastleton with Cromwell's soldiers in hot pursuit. His quick-witted wife, Sarah – my childhood heroine – hid him in the secret closet over the porch and although the pursuing soldiers found his exhausted horse in the stables they couldn't find him.

Sarah saved Arthur's life by lacing the soldiers' beer with laudanum and saddling up one of their horses for his escape as the soldiers slumbered. My sisters and I used to lie on the bed in the secret room and pretend we could hear the horses galloping towards us. The bed has now gone and the entrance to the room is barred with one of the National Trust's trademarks: a rope. It's a small restriction, but to me it was the

most powerful symbol of the change of ownership.

Most of the access to the house is completely unrestricted, however, and visitors are free to wander around wherever they want. The Trust has restored the house with great care and sensitivity and it has very successfully maintained the atmosphere of gentle decay, yet many of the visitors I spoke to said that the wooden furniture needed a really good polish, not just to make it shine but to preserve it. One man told me he felt so depressed by the general state of dusty disrepair that he was going home "to have a stiff drink". To me, of course, the rooms all seemed cleaner than I had ever seen them. But they also felt emptier, despite the people milling around.

I felt sad that the house is just a showcase now without any of the family there and without the hope of any more family celebrations to make it sing. Mine was the last of many happy weddings at the house. Dorothy Whitmore-Jones, who lived at Chastleton until 1857 and who brought up her seven children there, wrote in a letter to a friend about the marriage of her daughter Frances: "I invited the neighbourhood to a dance which really was a very gay and pretty thing; all those blue and pink gossamer-looking girls moving about in this beautiful well lit hall was well worth seeing and so thought our guests, who expressed a wish that there might be an annual marriage at Chastleton."

Although the visitor can wander at will, the rooms are guarded by National Trust vol-



unteers. Their presence, although very friendly and benign, still felt like an intrusion to me. They were a constant reminder that my fantasy of one day inheriting Chastleton was never going to happen. The only guardians of the house in my grandmother's time were her cats; she had 20 of them and they would hiss and arch their backs at any unwelcome intruders. Both my grandparents used to show people around the house at weekends but my grandfather's

opinion of visitors was entirely pragmatic. He would look out of the lead-latticed window of the oak parlour after lunch and when he saw a car or a coach approaching he would rub his hands together and say with a wry smile, "Oh good, here comes another bottle of gin up the drive."

Chastleton House can be visited by pre-arranged appointment only (telephone: 01608 674284) but it is fully booked until March 1998.



The Great Hall at Chastleton where Sarah Jewell had her wedding reception and, now, under the watchful care of its new keepers



## We will remember, try to figure Ruth out. My Ruth. Their Ruth. Our Ruth

Genevieve and I spot each other from opposite sides of Red Lion Square and wave. We collide at the entrance of the Conway Hall. I ask how she is. Genevieve says she can't believe we're here for this; a memorial service for Ruth Nadine Picardie. Can I? And I say, no, I can't.

We walk inside. Genevieve is nervous about her address. Too long? Too short? Too plain? Too fancy? Is Ruth there in the words? I soothe: Ruth will be there. Ruth will be everywhere.

Genevieve says she's promised herself she won't break down. I joke that she had better not, because people will, of course, boo. Genevieve starts. I instantly say, sorry, I imagined I was being funny. Okay, you break down. So what? You loved her.

Genevieve leaves to talk to Ruth's husband Matt and her sister Justine. I wander outside. Groups form, drag on last cigarettes, make tiny small talk about work, partners, bad movies, good food.

Minutes pass. More and more people congregate. Most wear black, many carry babies. Faces you saw last week, faces you

haven't seen in years. Helen appears. I apologise for not being on time earlier; Brixton tube was shut, today of all days. A queue forms. I check the time: 10.55. We go in.

Justine and Matt welcome us with warm hugs, meant kisses. We file to our seats. I count: 12 rows. Purple flowers lie scattered, candles scent the air lavender. It begins. We celebrate Ruth, dead from cancer at 33. We will remember, try to figure Ruth out. My Ruth. Their Ruth. Our Ruth.

Here's one Ruth, bright and fierce, reflected in a reading from *Pippi Longstocking*, the book she adored as a child, the book her family read to her as she lay in the hospice. Perfect symmetry: the story of an independent Miss. "The only girl in the world who may do exactly what she wants."

And over here: the Ruth who "was allergic to authority". And there: the Ruth who hated rudeness. And this Ruth, too, the Ruth of the Old Testament book, dedicated to her women friends. Ruth's father stands, reads the Biblical verses, first in Hebrew, then in English.

At the lectern Matt recalls meeting his Ruth at the Cambridge University Labour club; Ruth the younger, Ruth the head-over-heels. She was, what, 19? She dazzled in a sexy tartan mini-skirt and told him how "cool and hard" she thought he was. "As if," Matt says. There is laughter and more, the memory of good times, lest we forget them and play the past false.

Matt summons the major and the minor; chance remarks Ruth made, her political beliefs, how she tried to balance the gift of their children, Lola and Joe, with the pain of being taken from them. She so wanted to watch her babies grow.

And Ruth is, as predicted, everywhere; such a cruel comfort. She walks among us, a soothing presence, in the recitation of "Phantasia for Elvira Shatayev". Like the poem, she asks us not to worry. Practical Ruth. And romantic Ruth, dreaming through "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face", the song her brother-in-law sings now, as he originally sang it at Ruth and Matt's wedding.

Genevieve does crack, momentarily.

Everyone understands.

Babies squall. Adults weep. A couple clutch hands and sob. The deep, sore, selfish sobbing that is as much for ourselves as for the missing.

Justine reads from Ruth's *Observer* column, "Before I Say Goodbye". Justine conjures Ruth, the "I" that blinked out, and reads about the day Ruth found out she would die. Justine reads about the sheer bloody inconvenience of it. Justine reads and the lines are alive. Each word hums with the spirit of the adventurer Ruth was – perhaps still is – and, for a second, the world rights itself. We hear Ruth's voice and she sounds sorted. Angry, but sorted. A proper grace note. Justine pauses, signs the column off: "I know life will go on... It's just that I will miss it so."

Ruth's mother steps up last, takes a piece of paper and softly reads "Blackwater Woods". Full circle: she brought her here, she sends her out. It is the way of things.

Then the lights dim and music plays. And suddenly there Ruth is, the girl herself, up on the screen at the front of the

hall, a trick of the light.

Ruth in her garden, hair cropped close because of the chemotherapy.

Ruth the chubby baby in a cute hat.

Ruth on her tricycle, legs pedalling.

Ruth the sultry teenager, short of skirt and bright of lip, posed against a poster, staring right at you.

Ruth bent double laughing at a joke we'll never hear.

Ruth the bride with her beloved Matt, her curls for once tamed and roped with petals.

Ruth relaxed, happy in the heat of a summer's day.

Ruth, sweaty and ecstatic in her hospital bed, holding her twins, a job well done.

Around and around the pictures turn, illuminating the dark snapshots from something cut short: this is our daughter, our sister, our wife, our mother, our grievously mourned friend. On and on the photographs whirl until we end where we began: Ruth in her garden, frozen still, face to the sun. Ruth is smiling. She is here and she is not here.



JOHN YTTLE

In Monday the memorial service was held for Ruth Picardie, his friend and former colleague at The Independent.

## Our white, male, upper-middle-class, snail-paced judiciary



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There is an element of lottery in the law, but it is not decided randomly, by ping-pong balls in a wind machine. There is a bias in the system which ensures that some people are more likely to win than others. The narrow social background of judges has long been recognised as an obstacle to the impartial dispensation of justice, an obstacle being eroded with glacial slowness. Yesterday, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, suddenly announced new measures to open up the appointment of judges.

At first sight, he seems to deserve at least two cheers for widening the pool from which judges can be appointed and for making the process of appointment more transparent. There is no doubt that these small steps, such as asking people to apply for top judicial jobs instead of choosing them in secret, and taking into account career breaks to raise families, are infinitely preferable to inaction. But they are, in fact, so small that they would be utterly unexceptional in any other field of public ap-

pointment. And for that reason we can raise only a single shout of applause.

The overwhelming impression continues to be one of a closed and secretive system, with which Lord Irvine is quite happy because he controls it. He uses his power to benign ends, to be sure. He has also appointed two solicitors as deputy High Court judges, and rightly boasts that this has not happened before. Opening the judiciary to solicitors is long overdue.

But it is unsettling, to say the least, that he simply abandoned a promised consultation on the idea of an independent body to appoint judges. His decision was so abrupt that it leaves a clutch of leading lawyers with a meeting with his department pencilled into their diaries for later this month – a meeting that now seems redundant.

A key element of the status quo, then, is to remain in place. There was a time when Labour in opposition condemned the principle of a government minister ap-

pointing judges. Then Tony Blair became leader, and Mr Blair is Lord Irvine's protégé; the party's condemnation was quietly dropped. Still, the idea of an arm's-length Appointments Commission lived on, and the new government said it would consult on the merits of the proposal.

Yesterday Lord Irvine said he had decided not to proceed with a commission, but instead to concentrate on making the changes he regards as most urgent.

There is much to be said for not governing by endless consultation and reviews; it may be that a commission would simply be another quango dominated by judicial vested interests and absorbed into the present government machine. But to ditch a consultation process that has barely begun looks somewhat high-handed.

All that is left of the idea of a check on the actions of government is a pledge from Lord Irvine that he intends in the long term to review whether to appoint an ombudsman to examine complaints

from anyone who feels unfairly treated by the appointments process. As a short-term pledge this would be inadequate. As a long-term "maybe" it is feeble.

There is also a leaden silence from the Lord Chancellor on the barriers to an inclusive, representative judiciary farther down the food chain. The appointment of QCs, the barrister élite of "silks" from which judges are drawn, is still carried out in secret, through informal "soundings" and in a way that appears to discriminate against women and ethnic minorities.

In the small world of the new politico-legal establishment, it was Lord Irvine's other former pupil, Cherie Booth, who last month appeared to act as a spokeswoman for the Lord Chancellor's department. It had "recognised" that women's careers were slowed down more than men's by having a family, she said. "I think it is perfectly possible for women to have children, maintain an active role with those children and still develop a practice to a degree

which allows you to apply for silk and get it." She has, of course, proved it, but she is wholly exceptional. She not only became a QC at the young age of 40, but is on the first rung of the ladder in the judging business as an assistant recorder. Her success – thoroughly deserved – does not mean that the urgency of reform has diminished.

The figures tell their own story. There are 3,151 judges in England and Wales. Of these, 306 are women and 15 are non-white. "Not one black High Court Judge," as Mr Blair himself said in his speech to the Labour conference last week. The news bulletins tell the other, recurring part of the story, such as the judge last month who said that if a persistent shoplifter had to be separated from her baby at birth, that was part of her punishment. The white, male, privately-educated bias of the judiciary is a blot on British justice, and demands more vigorous action than the Lord Chancellor's tentative steps towards reform.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor  
and include a daytime telephone number.  
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk  
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address.  
Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

## LETTERS

### Tories and race

Sir: Rupert Cornwell ("Even Canute would not try to hold back the tide of multiculturalism", 9 October) offers a refreshing riposte to Lord Tebbit's narrow and zero-sum view of British society, where other cultures apparently have little to offer and may well Balkanise us into mutually hostile tribes.

Cornwell points to the United States' continuing vitality, drawing strength from its diversity. One could go further, in that American success in developing the sinews of a global market – with its predominance in IT media, finance and energy flows – is not simply attributable to having available capital and powerful multinational corporations, but also to the experience it has derived from being the world's leading multicultural society. Yes, there are domestic problems of adjustment. But this has given the US an edge in striking deals with other nations and being flexible and culturally attuned to their local markets as the US seeks further to prise open world trade.

Britain with an equally divergent domestic culture should celebrate the opportunities and advantages this may offer us.

RICHARD de ZOYSA  
Senior Lecturer in Politics  
South Bank University  
London SE1

Sir: William Hague tells us that he went to the Notting Hill Carnival to demonstrate the Conservative Party's support for a multicultural Britain. It might have looked better if he'd just gone because he wanted to be there.

Has Mr Hague been to the carnival before? I doubt it. Twenty years ago, while most of us were first enjoying things like the carnival, the young Hague was making pompous pronouncements at the Tory party conference. Little has changed.

KEITH JOHNSON  
Isleworth, Middlesex

Sir: I share Lord Tebbit's admiration for our nation's culture, from its deep classical roots in the philosophies of Plato and Socrates, through the Elizabethan flowering of such writers as Marlowe and Shakespeare, right up to our own cen-

tury – the music of Britten and Tippett, the poetry of Auden, the original military genius of T E Lawrence, the economics of Keynes, the painting of Hockney, the drama of Coward and Rattigan, the wit of Fry, the acting of Gielgud and McKellen. No wonder the leader of the opposition sent a message to gay ...

Er, start again. British traditions must be defended. In seeking reform of institutions such as the House of Lords, let us reaffirm the time-tested principle of heredity and abolish new-fangled devices such as slack-mouthed life peers.

MICHAEL MASON  
London SW7

Sir: I wonder if Lord Tebbit's call for a one-culture Britain might not quite be the best way for the Tories to launch a recovery in Wales and Scotland. BRYAN JONES  
Leeds

### Arts for the people

Sir: If David Lister ("Council goes in search of a future role", 3 October) is saying that it is not imperative that arts councils should persist in exactly their present form, many of us would agree. Nothing is for ever. The Arts Council of Wales will welcome debate, whether now or in the future Welsh Assembly.

The mission of an arts council is much wider than he implies. Bringing art to the people of Wales is exactly what the Council seeks to do. Small towns near and far from Cardiff are hungry for good arts provision. It is not all about flagship companies.

Chris Smith has rightly said that "things of quality have to be accessible to all". Arts councils have to help ensure that what is accessible is of high quality. This is not done by a civil servant on a wet Wednesday, but very largely by mem-

bers of Council and panels who are artists and experts in their own right and meticulous in withdrawing from discussions when their own interests are involved.

We should not rush to dispense with this network of high quality, unpaid advice. Let us, too, continue to protect our writers, painters, composers from having their creative agendas determined for them by political processes which will not always be benign. Had the Royal Academy been funded directly by a government department, it would have been surprising if in recent weeks ministers had not felt obliged to intervene.

Before rushing to judgement on the arts councils, we would do well to see what alternatives may be on offer. Sir RICHARD LLOYD JONES  
Chairman  
Arts Council of Wales  
Cardiff

### Corrupt police

Sir: The admission by Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police (report, 7 October) that "there is a significant minority" of corrupt officers" in his force makes a refreshing change from the usual bland assertions by some senior officers that the police must represent the public "warts and all".

But a more radical approach is needed than simply setting up special anti-corruption squads or changing the pension regulations to prevent bent officers from retiring on ill-health grounds.

Direct entry by outstanding candidates to top posts would obviate the problem encountered by senior officers who have been obliged by peer pressure in their rank-and-file days to commit indiscretions which could now be held against them as they try to attack corruption.

When the image of Scotland Yard stood supreme, during the stewardship of the direct entrant Lord Trenchard in the 1930s, the attitude of that Commissioner towards allegations of police malpractice was, "Tell the truth immediately". Perhaps a return to a similar philosophy would not come amiss in the 1990s.

JOHN KENNY  
London SW19

### Test for BSE

Sir: Of course there is a theoretical risk of blood donors who are incubating CJD transmitting the disease (report, 8 October). The subsequent fate of some of the patients who, between 1959 and 1985, received injections of CJD-contaminated human growth hormone suggests that it can be transmitted in this way.

The statement that it has "never occurred" through

blood transfusion is meaningless. Here is a disease whose incubation period is measured in years and whose infective agent cannot be identified because it cannot be grown in an incubator and observed under the microscope in the usual way. There is only one way to prevent blood transfusions from transmitting CJD and that would be to use a test on all blood donors.

There is a possible test, devised by a distinguished virologist, Dr Harsh Narang, who has devoted more than 25 years to the study of this mysterious infective agent. He first offered a test to the Ministry of Agriculture in 1988 and they refused to try it. It would have revealed that for every cow destroyed with florid BSE there would be hundreds incubating the disease but going into the food chain.

More recently the test would have identified cattle incubating BSE so that the

cull policy could have been restricted to them instead of the arbitrary, unscientific and ultimately unsuccessful cull policy which has so far cost the suicides of three farmers and the taxpayer £4bn. And his urine test has now been shown to be positive in 15 out of 15 humans who were subsequently proved to have CJD. Why is this test not being used to screen all blood donors?  
H C GRANT MD FRCP  
London NW3

### M15 to open files

Sir: I can confirm that the information given to David Turner (letter, 4 October) was correct. M15 have begun a series of transfers of their older records to the Public Record Office, in line with the process routinely followed by other government departments. The first records to be transferred will be made available to the public in our reading rooms on 18 November. This first transfer, which contains virtually all surviving material for the period of the First World War, will indeed be followed by others for the inter-war period and the Second World War.

The Public Record Office does certainly not regard the exercise as a "sop", nor was this expression ever used to Mr Turner. We are very pleased indeed that the transfer of M15 files, a process which has been some time in the planning, is now under way.  
ANNE CRAWFORD  
Press Officer  
Public Record Office  
Kew, Richmond, Surrey

### News in poetry

Sir: Ruth Padel's article on National Poetry Day (7 October) pricked my conscience. I was hunting for the Daily Poem and found it sandwiched between the following stories: "Shoppers take wing for London"; "Tourists flown home after firm's collapse"; "Frequent fliers have more sex". Have I become more aware, due to Ruth Padel, or are your headline writers part of the "movement", another Hughes or just Latin about? Metaphor, alliteration, rhythm, not to mention sexual allusion are constituents of the poetic convention.  
BRENDAN SMITH  
Purley, Surrey

## Young bards, whate'er you do to make a name, shun dread Poetry Day, it brings no fame



MILES KINGTON

As I was going home last night,  
Rather tired and slightly tight  
I heard a fellow on the bus  
Say to himself, or to all of us,  
"Oh no! Oh Lord! I clean forgot!  
Oh dear! Now I'm in a spot!"  
He sat and groaned and moaned aloud  
While everyone in that home-bound crowd  
Looked at each other curiously  
Wondering what his plight might be.  
At last, one braver than the rest  
(Or perhaps less British) then addressed  
That suffering man upon the bus  
And said: "Hey, hey – why all this fuss?  
Why do you grieve and sorrow so?  
Come on, tell us! We want to know!  
Blow your nose. Dry your eye.  
Here's a Kleenex. Now, try, man, try!"  
The passenger blew his nose so hard  
That everyone recoiled a yard,  
Then crept back close to hear how he  
Might justify his misery.  
"This morning, when I woke up in bed,

My girl turned to me," he said,  
"And forthwith challenged me to say  
What special day it was today.  
"Oh no!" I said. "It cannot be  
Our wedding anniversary!  
Have I forgotten it once again?  
It must have slipped my poor old brain."  
"No, no," she said, "how can that be?  
You are not even married to me!  
You still may pop the question yet.  
But till that day you're quite safe, pet..."  
It's true. The state that we live in  
Is less like marriage, more like sin.  
"You're right," I said. "So what's today?  
The equinox? The First of May?  
The start of National Peanut Week?  
Early closing on Mustique?  
A national feast in Pakistan?  
Dylan Thomas Day in Laugharne?"  
"Ah – now you're getting warm!" she smiled.  
"Think W.B. Yeats. Think Oscar Wilde!"  
"Something Irish?" I surmised.  
"Something poetical, rather, say.

Today is National Poetry Day!  
Today's the day when all must try  
To write a little poetry,  
To gurgitate a little verse,  
No matter how cursory or terse.  
"Gurgitate?" I said. "Can there be  
Such a word in the dictionary?"  
"Whether there can or not," said she.  
"Is immaterial to me.  
Poetic licence says there can!  
Now, listen, if you are a man,  
Write a poem, today, for me,  
Write it gently, tenderly  
So when you hit the homeward road,  
You'll bring your sonnet, or your ode,  
And when wine is served and candles lit,  
You can softly read me it."  
The man looked anguished as he spoke.  
He was a decent-looking bloke.  
But it was plain that he'd forgotten  
To write his poem. Now he felt rotten.  
But all at once the man who first  
Had asked him why he groaned and cursed

Said: "Come on – stop your whining, lad!  
Things are really not so bad.  
You're not the only one, you know,  
Who's going home with nowt to show.  
All of us upon this bus  
Were meant to bring on home with us  
A piece of poetry for the wife.  
But have we got it – not on your life!  
Am I right in my shrewd guess?"  
And as one man we shouted "Yes!"  
"You see," he said, "this Poetry Day  
Is just a load of straw and hay.  
Nobody takes it seriously,  
Except the press. You're bound to see  
The papers print a bit of verse,  
Some of it bad, some of it worse.  
It fills up space and makes them look smart,  
Though they couldn't give a toss for art.  
But everyone else can turn a blind eye  
When National Poetry Day comes by."  
It seems a very sensible view.  
I think he was probably right. Don't you?  
Thanks to the National Lottery for its support

## The Conservative should fear a referendum over Europe



**DONALD  
MACINTYRE**  
DECEPTIVE  
HARMONY

Is the Tory party gradually coming to its senses over Europe? Sir Leon Brittan, vice President of the European Commission and an ardent advocate of EMU, claims to think so. At a Blackpool fringe meeting yesterday he suggested that the argument was beginning to turn his way. Sir Leon is a notorious optimist. But it's still a case worth examining.

By promising Tory backbenchers a free vote on EMU William Hague has licensed a significant minority of pro-European MPs to follow the lead of Kenneth Clarke in campaigning for a yes vote in a referendum. The passionately pro-EMU David Curry, along with Sir George Young and Stephen Dorrell refused to accept a Shadow Cabinet decision, taken in their absence, to rule out the single currency for the next decade, substituting the distinctly elastic "for the foreseeable future". Peter Lilley in an emollient-sounding passage on EMU in his speech yesterday acknowledged the sincerity with which some "good Conservatives" believe in British entry. When Hague privately saw the Tory MEPs last month he was singularly undecisive. He had never, he reminded them, ruled out a single currency for ever. The hard core of delegates moving from one Europhobic fringe meeting to another is probably no more than 250. The pro-European Tory left, emboldened by the unexpected momentum of Clarke's July leadership campaign, are claiming fresh supporters and a new sense of purpose. Finally, one of the brightest new MPs, Andrew Tyrie, who is anything but a Clarkeite, will make a speech next month pleading with the party to resume its pre-election stance of "wait and see".

All this is seductive. But Sir Leon is being a good deal too optimistic. Hague's leadership is not yet consolidated. The Portillo, the Patten, the Clarke still loom ominously over his shoulder. Few of his colleagues yet speak of him with total confidence. This remains a party dangerously at ease with itself. Blood isn't being spilt about Europe, on the fringe and on the conference floor because many of the rank and file are now confident the policy is in their own hands. This is still a party in which a rostrum speaker can declare that continentalers are "different" because they "eat horses" and be wildly applauded rather than howled down. Yes, here and there, are little shafts of humility in defeat — a recognition that if Euroscepticism was the Tories' trump card, Labour wouldn't have won so big, least of all in those constituencies where candidates opposed the single currency outright. A few senior Eurosceptics doubt that the Tories could credibly campaign for withdrawal once Britain was in. But the centre of gravity is elsewhere.

Even last week's modest success by the Shadow Cabinet's pro-European rump now looks fragile. Michael Howard, John Red-

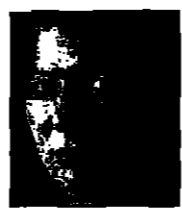
wood, and Ian Duncan Smith are seeking to overturn it at the next meeting — securing at the very least a formal, cast-iron commitment to oppose EMU in a referendum this Parliament, and that the next manifesto, if Britain hasn't already joined EMU, will be firmly against the single currency. Peter Lilley's smooth words yesterday may make it that much more difficult for Labour to portray the party as crankily extreme. But they belie the reality: that many in the party are now willing Blair to call a referendum in which they believe, whether self-deludingly or not, they can defeat the Government.

This is mildly bad news for the Government. If Sir Leon's optimism is misplaced then it follows that the risks of an early referendum are all the greater. The Tories would lose a lot of business support, perhaps permanently, and in the long term catastrophically. But they would have on their side Rupert Murdoch (the *Sun* was at it again yesterday, trying to taunt Blair into backing off EMU) and Conrad Black. This won't stop the Government declaring at the end of the year, that while it won't join on January 1, 1999, it is in favour of doing so as soon as the conditions are right. No-one, probably Blair included, yet knows when he would call a referendum. It could be as early as next year. But nothing that has happened in Blackpool makes a referendum before the next general election likely as it was. If you are going to "bet the ranch" on EMU entry, it may be better to wait until the Currys' lease is up for renewal anyway.

But if it's bad for the Government, it's worse for the Tories themselves. First, there is the danger of a split party. Tory Eurosceptics who hope that Clarke is about to give up the House of Commons and shuffle off to some big job in international finance should think again. Indirect overtures were made to him about the possibility of becoming boss of the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, which he politely rejected. Nor is there anything in the rather forlorn attempt by some members of the Shadow Cabinet's Eurosceptic majority to argue that since Clarke has now said he is against single currency entry on January 1, 1999, he is on their side. Clarke remains as in favour of the principle of the single currency as he ever was. He therefore remains a pivotal figure of this Parliament. If Blair were to call a referendum on EMU, he would be an essential part of the "yes" campaign. Most daunting of all for the Europhobic forces, PR could turn a licensed disagreement about EMU into a real split, with Clarke ending up at the head of a pro-European party of the centre right. He isn't in favour of PR himself, and he isn't a Peelite splitter by temperament. But he is nothing if not capable of reacting to changed circumstances.

Worse still, however, is the danger of long-term disconnection of the Tories, first from business, and then from the electorate itself. Blackpool was crowded yesterday by the bright young hopes of the Tory party from Michael Portillo down, reinventing themselves speculatively as gentler, more permissive conservatives. But this won't count for much if the Tories' European policy breaks the party's link, first with business and then with the electorate. The great advantage of the "wait and see" imposed on the party by Clarke before the election was that it committed it to nothing, while clearly subordinating party doctrine to the national interest. If public opinion, nurtured by Blair, starts to warm to EMU entry, then the danger is that Europe becomes for the Tories in the 1990s what union reform was for Labour in the 1980s; and that could mean a lot of lost general elections.

## How will we draw the dividing lines if we're all liberals now?



**SUZANNE  
MOORE**  
THE TORIES'  
NEW LOOK

So after all the years of rumours and whisperings Michael Portillo has finally come out. As a liberal. Tired of playing Robo-Portillo, wrapping himself in the Union Jack and castigating single mothers and foreigners he has come over positively fluffy. Tolerance is his new creed, and the new user-friendly, TV-presenting Portillo is tolerant of sexual indiscretions by those in public life, tolerant of unions and tolerant of those who have children without getting married. Gee thanks Michael, I'm touched gov'nor, I really am. It is not surprising that Portillo should be one of the first Tories out of this particular closet. After the shock of defeat by an openly gay candidate had registered, he was one of the first Conservatives to admit what a disaster the election had been.

Portillo is not alone in this. William Hague has been making his own peculiar overtures to parts of the community that Tory policies have so far failed to refresh. His desperately casual appearance at the Notting Hill Carnival and his message to gay pride earlier this year signalled a willingness to try and appeal to new constituencies. The basic problem that Hague has in trying to revivify the Tory Party is that while some like Tony Banks may say he looks very young, he acts as if he is very old. This must be why the lovely Pfiem was wheeled out at every occasion as if she was the real leader of the Tory party who just happened to have an unfortunate taste in men.

All this frantic re-positioning begs many questions not just for the Tories but for those on the Left too. It makes sense, and indeed seems the only viable option, for the Tories to re-group ideologically around a libertarian position. They can lay claim to it historically and yet also if they are clever, present it as entirely modern, in keeping with the anti-statist and minimal government model favoured by many.

In theory, such a position is one way of drawing a clear blue line between themselves and Blair's sometimes hectoring and patronising government. In practice, however, a genuine libertarian position would ap-



Martin Adam and William Zachs with their daughter

Photograph: Colin McPherson

many of the Tory rank and file who find it hard to accept women as equals, never mind gay rights or the de-criminalisation of hard drugs. Tebbits jibe at "those who advocate sodomite marriage" is a sign of how far there is to go. The true libertarian must be able to say to Tebbits that not only "sodomite marriage" is permissible, but so is adoption by gay couples with both recognised as legal parents. A libertarian position on drugs would not advocate their use but consider their consumption to be an entirely private matter. Abortion too would be seen as a personal matter.

While the sea of grey haired heads nodding off at Blackpool would have a hard time swallowing such social liberalism, the rest of us might wonder if such a transformation would destroy any meaningful divide between right wing and left wing thinking. Those already uncomfortable at Jack Straw's

refusal to contemplate the de-criminalisation of cannabis, and who cannot stand the direly sensible pronouncements on food and alcohol and smoking by New Labour, may find solace in a party that treats us as grown ups capable of making our own decisions. The end of ideology if it means anything, means that as the two parties vie to be the most effective managers of the free market, politics moves out of the public arena and invades the private sphere more and more, with those at the bottom of society experiencing more and more state intervention than those at the top.

The current Labour party is liberal-ish, rather than libertarian, emphasising its toughness at every available opportunity. The liberal Left views the family as repressive and wants the state to legislate for equality and "alternative" lifestyles. The *Daily Telegraph* warns us, again mistaking this government for the liberal left.

Tony Blair has fallen over himself promoting the family as the bedrock of stable communities. The Labour Party has pulled back from positive discrimination. It sat tight during the Criminal Justice Bill, so the news that it legislates on behalf of "alternative lifestyles" is something of a shock.

It has so far been good on gay rights, but such "tolerance" which costs nothing financially suits an administration that has promised not to spend any more money than the Tories. All of this means that is be-

coming more and more difficult to define liberal and illiberal positions in the traditional way.

When someone who has been called a "right-wing harpie" like Ann Leslie can write in the *Daily Mail* that she "finds herself slightly to the left of New Labour", then as she says herself, "anything can happen". If both parties are the parties of low taxation; if both parties promise to reinstate local government; if both parties proclaim that they are welcoming to everyone whether they are gay or black or even female, then the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Some might see this as the inevitable Americanisation of politics, with both parties competing for the centre vote. Others might point out, as Polly Toynbee did this week, that whatever Tories say, there is not a liberal bone in their body politic. They cannot even begin to become a more modern, more inclusive party until they do something about their terrible lack of women MPs, yet because they cannot accept the idea of structural inequality, they cannot even consider a quota system. That would really be thinking the unthinkable instead of allowing their sad old men to say the unsayable at fringe meetings.

Yet we should not be complacent. Tebbits remarks on multi-culturalism were roundly rebuked but naturally reprinted all over place. While we know he is wrong, the so-called liberal left has its own problems with multi-culturalism which it pays lip service to while whipping its own children out of schools where they make actually experience some of it.

What we are really witnessing is the rusty machinery of the Tory party cranking itself up for an era of cultural and moral relativism. Maybe we don't want our politicians to be as absolute and as certain as they once were. When Labour is all humility and giving, and the Tories suddenly all tolerance and compassion, it's a wonder they could bring themselves to oppose each other in the first place. My feeling however is that as we increasingly expect our politicians to make small rather than grand promises, to deliver a little rather than a lot, we are ultimately asking for them to be less powerful. That strikes me as the one properly liberal position, that neither left nor right has a lot of time for.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Trees of Time and Place

## Bibi Netanyahu's failed bid to emulate King Claudius



**PATRICK  
COCKBURN**  
COCK-UP AND  
CONSPIRACY

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, may be the first political leader since Hamlet's uncle Claudius to try to kill one of his enemies by putting poison in his ear. Neither attempt had a happy outcome, though Claudius's assassination bid was the better planned, since he waited until his victim was asleep. The Israeli leader, for his part, gave the go-ahead for a plan by Mossad, the Israeli foreign intelligence service, to kill Khalid Meshal, a Hamas leader, by injecting a slow acting, but deadly poison, into his ear as he entered his office in Amman, Jordan.

Almost immediately it all

went disastrously wrong. Mr Meshal is injected, but his bodyguard doggedly pursues and captures two Mossad agents, disguised as Canadian tourists. Suddenly the exotic poison does not seem such a good idea after all. An angry King Hussein, Israel's best friend in the Arab world, later said that if Mr Meshal had died he would have put the Mossad men on trial and, if found guilty, hanged them.

To avoid this happening Mr Netanyahu decides to send an antidote to the poison to Jordan to be administered to the Hamas leader, the preservation of whose life has suddenly become an Israeli priority. But King Hussein is now in a thoroughly suspicious mood. How does he know that Mr Netanyahu has really sent him the antidote? "He is an impossible man to deal with," he complains to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*. "He sent a syringe, but I don't know if it was more poison."

King Hussein wants the original formula for the poison to be on the safe side. But now there is a further problem. Mr Netanyahu says that the formula is "an Israeli national asset". He will not give it up. Only when further representations are made by President Clinton

does Israel identify the poison. Mr Meshal, whose chances were put by an Israeli official at 50:50, lives and the Israeli government breathes a collective sigh of relief, suggesting some flaws in the original plan to kill him.

In retrospect it all looks so frivolous. A child could see that if the operation went right the benefits to Israel were marginal. Mr Meshal is not a senior figure in Hamas. But if the plan went wrong then Israel would have offended and weakened King Hussein, who signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994 that is deeply unpopular among his own people. Now Israel was treating him with contempt.

One senior member of Likud, Mr Netanyahu's own party, commented pointedly on the juvenile quality of his leader's decision-making by referring to the Bible and, in particular, to Ecclesiastes, chapter 10, verse 16, which reads: "Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes feast in the morning."

Almost obscured by the absurdities and dramas of the assassination attempt is that it caused Mr Netanyahu to reverse the most central of his government's policies. For a year he has insisted that Yasser Arafat arrest members of Hamas, as

the instigators of suicide bomb attacks. Again and again in briefings, private and public, Israeli officials would demand that Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority, close down "the infrastructure" of Hamas, its social services on which some 60,000 poorer Gazans rely. Until this was done, Mr Netanyahu said, there would be no progress in implementing the Oslo agreement, no further withdrawals from the West Bank.

It is this policy plank that has now been effectively abandoned, without most Israelis noticing it. By releasing Sheikh Yassin, the founder of Hamas, in order to get back the two captured Mossad agents, Mr Netanyahu has undercut his own demand for Mr Arafat to crush Hamas politically and militarily. Even if the Palestinian leader wanted to do it, he no longer has the political strength to act.

Why did Mr Netanyahu abandon this policy so fecklessly? It may be that he simply regarded it as a way not to implement the Oslo accords, which he did not like anyway. It may also be that he never thinks more than a few days ahead. But there is another development, which he could not have predicted. Suddenly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a

major new player: Sheikh Yassin.

It is not just that he is out of prison: he is acquiring real political stature. He was said to be at death's door and he has not been able to move his arms and legs since a sporting accident as a teenager. But Israelis and Palestinians forgot that these disabilities did not stop him becoming the most powerful religious figure in Gaza before he was jailed for life in 1989. Since Sheikh Yassin's release from prison he has done nothing but give carefully-worded and forceful interviews. The press still talks of the "spiritual leader of Hamas", but it is becoming clear that he will be far more than that.

Typically, Jordanians and Palestinians are not convinced that the so-called Meshal affair was a spectacular Israeli bungle. Could it not be a subtle attempt by Israel to set King Hussein and Mr Arafat at each other's throats? Why, for instance, did Israel ignore a note from King Hussein saying Hamas was interested in a ceasefire, sent to Mr Netanyahu two days before the ceasefire? The answer is most probably sheer incompetence, but this is unlikely to pass muster in the Arab world.

Mr Arafat's suspicions were

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# Surprise increase in German rates sends world markets lower

The Bundesbank increased German interest rates yesterday, following Alan Greenspan's signal on Wednesday that US rates will rise. The Bank of England left the cost of borrowing in the UK unchanged, but it will follow the international trend before long, predicts Diane Coyle, Economics Editor.

A surprise increase in the Bundesbank's key money market interest rate caught the world's financial markets on the hop, sending bond and share prices lower for the second day running. Although analysts had widely expected German rates to rise, nobody expected it to happen just yet.

The 0.3 point increase in the Bundesbank's repo rate to 3.3 per cent was followed by smaller increases by the French and Dutch central banks. But the Bank of England announced that it was leaving UK rates unchanged at 7 per cent this month.

The German mark spiked higher against the dollar and pound, and there were unconfirmed rumours that a number of central banks had intervened in the currency markets to support the dollar.

The FTSE 100 index in London fell as much as 96 points during the day before ending 44 points lower at 5,217.8. Across the Atlantic the Dow Jones index also dropped 90 points when Wall Street opened, later recovering to be 43 points down at 8,052.33.

It was the second day of weakness after Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Chairman, sent an unexpected signal on Wednesday that US interest rates will have to rise. He de-

scribed America's economic boom as "unsustainable" because of the tightening labour market.

Figures yesterday showing that new unemployment claims in the US fell to their lowest since early 1989 in the latest four weeks added force to his warning. The figure fell to an average of 306,750 from 308,750 in the preceding four weeks.

The declines in the Anglo-Saxon and European financial markets yesterday followed overnight setbacks in the Asian stock markets. Both Japan's Nikkei index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell back sharply, by 1.4 per cent and 4.3 per cent respectively.

Some commentators saw these successive moves as evidence that the financial bubble that has so concerned Mr Greenspan has been punctured. "With the German move following hard on the heel of Mr Greenspan's comments, the decline in the stock and bond markets could be sustained," said Mark Cliffe of HSBC Markets.

Douglas McWilliams of the Centre for Economic and Business Research warned yesterday that the US stock market remained 25 per cent overvalued, and London share prices were 10 per cent too expensive. "There have been only two occasions when US share prices have been this overvalued, in 1987 and 1929," he said. "They are rather unfortunate precedents."

Others, however, were not as pessimistic. Dhaval Joshi, equity strategist at Robert Fleming, said: "Items of bad news can set off a short-term panic and we are seeing an episode of that. But it doesn't have to end in a blow-off."

Michael Hughes of BZW said: "The markets had been getting a little bit ahead of themselves and just found the excuse for a setback."

The Bundesbank's move yesterday was interpreted as a step taken

mainly to ease the transition to European Monetary Union, as all member countries will need to converge to the same level of interest rates by the time it starts just over a year from now. Günter Rexrodt, the Economics Minister, said it showed Germany's determination to maintain stability ahead of EMU.

The German authorities have also been concerned to prevent the mark from falling further, as increases in import prices have reached an eight-year high.

However, most economists did not think the interest rate increase would damage the recovery. "External factors pushed them into making this move, but it should not harm the domestic economy," said Michael Lewis at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

Banque de France raised its intervention rate by 0.2 points to 3.3 per cent after the Bundesbank announcement.

However, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee decided yesterday to leave UK rates unchanged at 7 per cent. Minutes of its two-day meeting, showing its debate and how its members voted, will be published six weeks from now.

Many City experts nevertheless expect that it will increase rates by the end of the year. Whether and when it acts will depend on figures due in the next week or so, especially the initial estimate of the increase in GDP during the third quarter.

This is expected to show that growth has not slowed down despite the four small increases in loan rates since the beginning of May. The strong pound has not yet squeezed exports enough to offset buoyant consumer spending fuelled by higher incomes, declining unemployment and the windfalls of free shares from former building societies.

Outlook, page 25.



Hans Tietmeyer, Bundesbank president, caught markets on the hop with a 0.3 per cent rise

## High street spending still strong, CBI survey shows

Consumer spending on the high street is still "fairly robust", the Confederation of British Industry said yesterday. Growth in sales volumes picked up in September, although by less than retailers had expected.

Alastair Eperon, chairman of the CBI's Distributive Trades Survey, said: "Growth remains quite strong and expectations for October indicate a quickening in the pace of expansion."

The survey divided City opinion about whether windfalls of free building society shares were still helping boost consumer spending. Some pundits focused on the fact that underlying sales volumes for the past three months have slowed somewhat, while others explained that the impact of the funeral of the Princess of Wales had been expected to leave the figures far weaker.

Michael Saunders of Salomon Brothers was in the first category. "The windfall boost is beginning to fade," he said, pointing to the fact that the underlying trend shown was the weakest since the start of 1996.

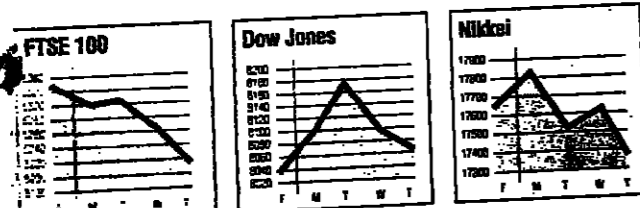
But John O'Sullivan at NatWest Markets said he had expected a very weak result from the survey. "Continued strength in the demand for durables suggests the windfall effect is not diminishing yet," he said. The fact that sales had been lower than retailers were expecting could be explained by the shutdown on the first Saturday of the month.

The balance of retailers reporting higher rather than lower sales volumes edged up to 26 per cent last month from 22 per cent in August. The increase was due mainly to a surge in purchases of big ticket items such as washing machines and televisions, where the balance climbed from 5 per cent to 80 per cent. In some other areas sales volumes slowed down, especially housing-related goods such as furniture and DIY.

Economists cautioned that in recent months the CBI survey had proved an unreliable guide to the official figures. If the latest survey did turn out to be more closely linked, the official statistics would show higher annual growth in sales volumes because of a weak September performance last year, but a small decline compared with August.

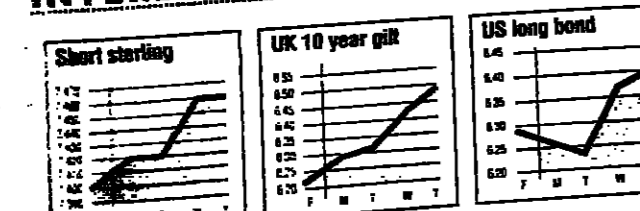
— Diane Coyle

### STOCK MARKETS



Indices	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5217.80	-44.30	-0.84	5330.80	3900.40	3.34
FTSE 250	4864.60	-17.70	-0.36	4983.30	4348.10	3.31
FTSE 350	2509.40	-19.00	-0.75	2655.30	1949.20	3.32
FTSE All Share	2451.49	-17.64	-0.71	2492.41	1925.79	3.31
FTSE SmallCap	2376.11	-4.20	-0.18	2380.30	2128.40	3.07
FTSE Biotech	1306.7	-2.50	-0.19	1346.50	1198.70	3.21
FTSE Pharma	1306.7	-2.50	-0.19	1346.50	1198.70	3.21
FTSE AM	1004.3	-30.45	-3.38	1059.31	592.67	0.87
Dow Jones	8063.03	-242.26	-3.38	21612.30	17304.65	0.83
Nikkei	12773.12	-585.40	-3.81	16673.27	12055.17	2.91
Hong Kong	4243.01	-104.23	-2.40	4436.39	2659.25	1.98

### INTEREST RATES

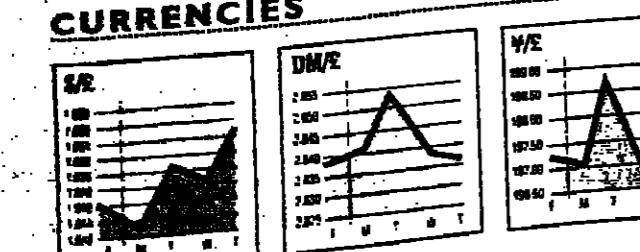


Money Market Rates	3 month	6 month	1 year	1 yr city	18 year	1 yr city	Long bond	1 yr city
UK	7.37	1.43	7.63	1.38	6.49	-0.87	6.49	-1.25
US	5.75	0.22	5.97	0.16	6.10	-0.44	6.39	-0.44
Japan	0.53	0.03	0.58	-0.05	2.00	-0.80	2.55	-0.74
Germany	3.42	0.30	3.62	0.59	5.59	-0.38	6.14	-0.69

### MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Stocks	Price (p)	Chg (p)	% Chg	Falls	Price (p)	Chg (p)	% Chg
Colt Telecom	506.50	33.00	5.96	Biochem	402.50	-27.50	-5.29
Colt Energy	400.00	21.00	5.54	D-Mark	247.00	-51.00	-5.11
Colt Finance	106.50	25.00	3.96	Gen Accident	1066.50	-54.00	-4.92
First Leisure	291.50	11.00	3.92	Briton Estate	220.5	-3.5	-4.73

### CURRENCIES



Forward				Dollar			
	at 100	Change	% Chg		at 100	Change	% Chg
Dollar	1.6254	+0.266	1.645	Sterling	0.6153	-0.109	-0.17
D-Mark	2.9355	-0.250	2.9916	D-Mark	1.7442	-0.418	-0.24
Yen	197.01	+40.51	174.65	Yen	121.21	+40.11	+33.1
£ index	100.00	-0.10	67.20	\$ index	104.80	-0.10	-0.10

### OTHER INDICATORS

Indicator	Value	Chg	% Chg	Indicator	Value	Chg	% Chg
US GDP	21.89	-0.12	23.89	GDP	112.80	3.50	108.0
US CPI	328.95	-2.20	381.45	RPI	159.30	3.6	153.75
US PPI	5.84	-0.01	4.97	Base Rates	7.00	5.75	

source: Bloomberg

## Minister rules himself out of third competition inquiry

Nigel Griffiths, the Competition Minister at the DTI, has been barred from taking part in three important competition inquiries because of conflicts of interest. Michael Harrison reports on the investigations in question and difficulties facing the Government's Competition Bill.

The Department of Trade and Industry confirmed last night that Mr Griffiths had exempted himself from the examination of a \$3bn chemicals deal between ICI and Du Pont of the United States because he owned shares in ICI.

This is the third time that

Mr Griffiths has been forced to rule himself out of inquiries because of conflicts of interest. He has taken no part in the DTI's long-running investigation in to the P&O-Stena cross Channel ferry merger because his family own shares in P&O. He has also been excluded from involvement in the inquiry into the travel trade industry, although the DTI was last night unable to say why.

The sale of ICI's polyester and titanium dioxide interests to Du Pont was announced in July and finally approved by the European Commission four days ago. Although responsibility for vetting the deal fell to Brussels, the DTI was involved in examining the deal and making representations.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, wrote to her shadow, the Con-

servative trade and industry spokesman John Redwood, on 2 October confirming that Mr Griffiths had taken no part in the investigation. A DTI spokesman said that Mr Griffiths had not seen any papers



Nigel Griffiths: Exempted from \$3bn ICI inquiry

relating to the case, nor had he made any recommendations to Mrs Beckett about the deal.

The travel inquiry is examining links between tour operators and travel agencies to see whether common ownership acts against the public interest. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission report into the matter is due to go to ministers in November.

The DTI said Mr Griffiths had agreed in July to stand aside from any consideration of the MMC report in. During the summer there were complaints that Mr Griffiths had made comments at a travel conference which had compromised his position. He is reported to have said that the tour operator Thomson, which owns the Lunn Poly chain of travel agents, should rebrand them in the Thomson name to make

their ownership of the business clear.

A DTI spokesman said that Mr Griffiths had a long-standing interest in the travel industry but declined to say whether the complaints about his comments had prompted the decision to stand aside. "To avoid any doubt he decided to play no part in the inquiry," the spokesman added. The DTI also said that Mr Griffiths made his decision long before Mr Redwood had written to Mrs Beckett to raise the matter and the Competition Minister's other conflicts of interest.

Last night Mr Redwood returned to the attack saying: "These are three of the biggest issues facing the DTI and the Competition Minister cannot touch any of them. It is a rum situation altogether."

The DTI said, however, that

it was not surprising that ministers had to exempt themselves from involvement in competition inquiries from time to time. "This is a share owning democracy and there are a lot more people owning shares than ever before. There are also a lot more mergers coming forward for judgement. Therefore the chances of a minister holding shares in companies that may come before him is that much higher."

Mr Redwood also claimed that the Mrs Beckett was being forced to redraft her Competition Bill extensively after discovering that it would render a large number of existing trade agreements illegal, including the Royal Mail's letter monopoly and agreements protecting privatised rail operators from competition.

Outlook, page 25

## House of Fraser shows first signs of turnaround

House of Fraser, the struggling DH Evans and Dickens & Jones department store group, gave the first evidence that its long-awaited recovery is bearing fruit yesterday when it reported reduced first half losses and news that its new brand of own-label clothing is selling well. Nigel Cope, City Correspondent, reports.

Chief executive John Coleman, who joined House of Fraser last year, said sales and margins had improved and the company would have sold its troublesome backlog of unwanted stock by the end of the year.

He said: "We believe that the milestones we set out to achieve have been achieved either on or ahead of schedule. We feel confident that House of Fraser

is on the right track." He was speaking as the company reported losses of £1.8m in the first half compared to £13.6m in the same period last year.

Sales rose by 3.8 per cent on a like-for-like basis and by 5 per cent in current trading, though September sales were affected by the shopper malaise which followed the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Chairman Brian McGowan, who has said he will "fall on my sword" if there are any further slip-ups at the accident-prone group, said he was encouraged about the performance but would stand by his pledge. "If things go wrong I will have to say 'Well I gave it my best shot, and that it is time for someone else to have ago.'"

He said the priority for House of Fraser was to drive margins higher rather than concentrate on sales growth. Margins have been boosted by higher sales of the company's own-bought ranges. In-store concessions have been moved

to less prominent parts of House of Fraser's 51 department stores as the company seizes the best trading areas for its own merchandise. "The concessions have had it easy for too long at House of Fraser," said Mr McGowan.

Sales of the new Linea clothing brand, which was launched in July, are exceeding even the company's most ambitious expectations. Mr Coleman said sales per square foot in the areas devoted to Linea were 80 per cent higher than the rest of its own-bought womenswear space.

The long-running problem of unsold stock is set to be removed by the end of the year when the company says all the excess, discounted stock will be sold. Part of last year's £53.2m provision will be drawn down to cover the costs.

House of Fraser shares, which were priced at 180p when the company floated in 1994, closed 1.5p higher at 216.5p. Investment Column, page 27

Tim Waterstone and his advisers at SBC Warburg were last night putting the finishing touches to revised proposals to restructure WH Smith. They plan to present their new case early next week. Tom Stevenson, Financial Editor, reports.

Tim Waterstone will present new proposals to WH Smith early next week in a bid to answer investors' concerns about his original restructuring plan which was rejected last week by the retailer's board. The biggest change is likely to be a sharp reduction in the level of debt that would be taken on to fund a special payment to shareholders.

Under Mr Waterstone's initial proposals to WH Smith's chairman, Jeremy Hardie, shareholders would have received a 200p-a-share handout together with a share in a new-

ly formed acquisition vehicle carrying £570m of new debt and gearing of around 80 per cent.

Responding to the concerns of leading shareholders that that level of financial leverage was too high for a company already characterised by significant operational gearing, Mr Waterstone and his advisers at SBC Warburg are expected to reduce the payout to between 125p and 150p a share. That would add borrowings of between £350m and £424m to the new company's balance sheet.

Mr Waterstone and Ian Martin, the chairman of Unigate who would become non-executive chairman of Smiths under the proposals, have spent most of this week briefing shareholders on their plans. They are thought to have seen investors speaking for more than 50 per cent of the shares.

It is also likely that Mr Waterstone's private retail venture, Daisy & Tom, will be acquired by the restructured Smiths at little more than the

investment already put in of around £10m. Any further payment would be contingent on future earnings, meaning shareholders only paid out if the concept proved successful.

Despite maintaining its opposition to Mr Waterstone's proposals, it emerged yesterday that WH Smith had agreed to requests from several institutions for meetings which will be held today and on Monday. They are expected to question the company on the extent to which its board was unanimous in rejecting Mr Waterstone's approach.

It is understood that at least one board member was out of the country when the proposals were discussed and questions have been raised about why Mr Hardie, with whom the proposals were initially discussed, has so far held back from putting his name to the rejection.

A spokesman for the Takeover Panel said yesterday there was no immediate intention to call for a clarification of Mr Waterstone's proposals.

## Thousands hit by mortgage endowment shortfalls

Evidence is mounting that a substantial number of those who took out unit-linked endowments may end up with less than needed to pay off their mortgages.

As Andrew Verity reports, figures show that the investments into which savings were put have performed below expectations – in some cases so much so that many will have to plough in more money.

More than half of the life assurance providers which sold unit-linked endowments have put investors' money in investments which show lower growth over 10 years than was needed to pay off mortgages in full.

Mortgage experts are suggesting that holders of unit-linked endowments should check their investment as new figures suggest savings have grown by less than they were led to hope.

Unless the endowment savings grow by unexpectedly high amounts before they mature, policyholders are likely to find their endowments fail to pay off their mortgages.

This could leave investors to make up a shortfall at the last minute.

Figures from financial statistics specialists Micropal show that managed life funds, the vehicles to invest the savings of most endowment holders, have failed to grow enough to meet the hopes of customers who bought unit-linked endowments before 1995.

More than 90 out of 158 managed life funds have seen annual growth of less than 7 per cent over 10 years, even though they were sold on the basis that investors could expect up to 10.5 per cent growth. Across the sector, the average annual growth over

10 years has been just 6.58 per cent. Patrick Buntin, an endowment expert at mortgage brokers London & Country, said: "If funds have underperformed the expected growth rate then it is correct to expect that there will be a shortfall."

In the competitive housing market between 1987 and 1995, several leading providers of endowments were able to offer customers low premiums because they used optimistic growth rates. Eagle Star last week admitted that customers were being compensated because investment growth on their policies was poorer and expenses were higher than they had been led to expect.

But the majority of investors, who put their money in managed funds, have seen much lower growth than this over 10 years. According to Micropal, Commercial Union saw annual growth of just 5.79 per cent over 10 years. For Scottish Provident, the figure was 6.23 per cent.

Ironically, the life companies were forced by the then regulator, Lauro, to use growth rates of at least 7 per cent. Observers now believe most policyholders who saw themselves as cautious and took the smallest risk may not have been cautious enough. In 1993, endowment premiums on a mortgage worth £50,000 cost £100 or less

if investors could bank on growth of more than 8 per cent a year.

Scottish Provident has written to policyholders who bought unit-linked endowments before 1985 to warn them of potential shortfalls in their endowment policies and invite them to step up contributions.

Roger Edwards, a spokesman for Scottish Provident, said: "We are formulating a strategy to deal with endowment reviews generally and what the implications are."

However, other life offices played down the fears. A spokesman for Scottish Widows said investments had performed better since it launched its contract in 1991.



Living dolls: Toys modelled on the Spice Girls are expected to be in short supply in the run-up to Christmas

## Doll deal spices up Character's share appeal

They are likely to be the toys children really, really want this Christmas. Spice Girls dolls will hit the shops in mid-December, sparking a buying frenzy. And Character Group, a small licensing company, has won the exclusive UK distribution rights. Nigel Cope reports on another merchandise spin-off which could rival Teletubbies' as the UK's most sought-after toy this Christmas.

Parents across the country discovered yesterday how they will be spending the run-up to Christmas: standing outside toy shops and department stores at ungodly hours desperately hoping to lay their hands on Toytown's latest hot ticket: Spice Girls dolls. Standing just 11.5 inches tall and priced at £17 to £20, they will be like gold dust.

Character Group, the licensing company formerly known as Toy Options, announced yesterday that it had won the exclusive UK licence to distribute the dolls. It will ship 500,000 dolls by February but less than half that

number will reach the high street in time for Christmas.

The shortage of supply seems guaranteed to make the five dolls this year's equivalent to Buzz Lightyear when huge demand forced desperate parents to pay huge sums to secure the toys from America.

Gerry Masters of the Association of British Toy Retailers said: "It's definitely going to be like Buzz Lightyear over again. There can't possibly be enough dolls to cope with demand. There are going to be a lot of disappointed fans." He said toy shops were already ex-

periencing outbreaks of "toy rage" as frustrated shoppers searched for popular items such as Teletubbies and Tamagotchi virtual pets. "We are thinking of running a course on how to deal with it," he said.

Character Group secured the rights from Galoob Toys, the US company which makes the dolls. Character's shares soared 21.5p to 147.5p on the news.

Richard King, chairman of Character Group, said: "We expect demand to outstrip initial supply but we will do our best to keep up."

## BSkyB fury as cable ruling gives green light to BBC

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport last night angered BSkyB. Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster, by giving the BBC permission to offer its 24-hour news service free to cable operators.

BSkyB last month threatened to seek a judicial review of the BBC's plans to provide cable companies with the service free of charge, accusing the Corporation of predatory pricing. Cable operators are charged 49p a month per subscriber to receive Sky News.

The service, known as BBC News 24, is funded by the licence fee and will go on air next month on the existing analogue cable network and during the night on BBC 1. The Corporation also plans to make the

service available on digital cable, satellite, and terrestrial television as these platforms become available next year.

Five cable operators have already agreed to carry the BBC's service, including Telewest Communications, Cable & Wireless Communications, Diamond Cable Communications, NTL and ComTel/Telecentric. At least two of these – NTL and Telewest – are thought to have decided not to carry Sky News in areas where they are not contractually obliged to do so.

A spokesman for BSkyB said: "There is clearly no need for another 24-hour news service, but we look forward to competing with BBC News as we have competed in sport and other programming."

Tony Hall, chief executive of

BBC News, said yesterday: "With hundreds of new channels on the horizon, BBC News 24 will give licence-fee payers a public service choice for the multi-channel age."

The BBC's £30m investment in 24-hour news, which forms part of the Corporation's preparations for digital television, has run into controversy as it will be funded by efficiencies and savings elsewhere in the Corporation.

The BBC's commercial arm, BBC Worldwide, has also signed a joint venture with Flextech, the cable and satellite programmer, which will see the creation of a number of pay-TV channels, four of which will begin broadcasting next month.

— Cathy Newman

## National Power pays £100m for Czech generating stake

National Power yesterday provided its international operations further by paying £100m for a stake in the Czech power generating industry.

The company, Britain's biggest electricity producer, is taking a 48 per cent holding in Elektrarna Opavice (EOP), which has interests in seven generating plants with a total capacity of 825 megawatts.

The deal takes National Power's investment in overseas generating capacity to more than £1bn. It now has interests in 8,500 megawatts of capacity in eight countries outside the UK. It expects its overseas earnings to rise from £74m in 1996-97 to £145m in the current financial year. Almost a quarter of its 4,000 staff are now employed abroad. Keith Henry, National Power's chief executive,

said the latest investment would provide it with a significant presence in the growing Czech electricity and co-generation markets and would open the way for it to build up a portfolio of plants in the country.

EOP is listed on the Prague stock exchange and its other main shareholders include Czech municipalities with 24 per cent.

Last year National Power spent £670m overseas, its main investment being to take a majority stake in the Australian generating group Hazelwood. Investment this year will not reach that level although National Power has identified overseas projects worth £1.5bn and expects annual investment outside the UK to run at £300m-£600m a year.

— Michael Harrison

## Chesterton shares slump by 40 per cent after second profit warning

Shares in Chesterton International, the estate agent, yesterday slumped by more than 40 per cent to 23p after the company announced its second profit warning in three months. Chesterton cautioned it would make "a substantial loss" for the year to June but said it would not release its final results until later this month.

The announcement comes after the group said in August that profits would fall "substantially below market expectations".

The warning is the latest instalment in a disastrous saga at Chesterton. In September 1996, the company uncovered a £1.4m black hole in its accounts, over half of which resulted from double-counting of profits.

The shock announcement coincided with the exit of Giles Ballantine, the group's chief executive. Chesterton tried to put its problems behind it by introducing a set of financial controls but the latest warning has once again shattered investor confidence in the group.

Chesterton has been pursuing an active disposal strategy since August in a bid to turn its fortunes around. On 1 October it announced the sale of its loss-making residential property management business and on Tuesday it agreed to sell its 49 per cent stake in the group's US asset management business to the majority shareholders. The company is currently discussing the sale of its loss-making plant and machinery division and may also dispose of its construction services busi-

ness. The group which made a pre-tax profit of £2.4m last year, has seen its share price slump from its June 1994 flotation price tag of 100p.

Chesterton said in August that profits would be lower than expected due to poor final quarter trading and the adoption of "more prudent" accounting policies. Shares dropped by 40 per cent to 33.5p. But Michael Holmes, the new chief executive, said then that the "fundamentals of our business" were still sound.

## Commerzbank rules out purchase of BZW

Pressure mounted on Barclays yesterday to find a buyer for BZW's equities and corporate finance arms after Commerzbank, one of the front-runners, ruled itself out of contention. Tom Stevenson, Financial Editor, reports on the continuing fallout from Barclays' decision to withdraw from investment banking.

Commerzbank, Germany's third-largest bank, yesterday said it had no interest in buying all or part of BZW's equities and corporate finance businesses. The withdrawal means only France's Paribas has made public its interest and concerns are mounting that without a quick sale, the firm could lose staff, clients and credibility.

Barclays shares closed 20p lower at 1,627.5p yesterday after the announcement, having dipped as low as 1,595p. Commerzbank, which had been linked with the investment bank for months in City speculation, said BZW did not match its earnings expectations and it would not enter the bidding.

Insiders at BZW continued to warn yesterday that any further delay could prove fatal for the firm if it meant key staff and clients were lost. Headhunters have been swarming over BZW's staff since last week's announcement by Martin Taylor, Barclays' chief executive, that it had thrown in the towel in investment banking.

Goldman Sachs, which has been appointed to draw up a shortlist of buyers, is expect-

ed to have put together a full sales pack on the firm within three weeks. Securing a quick disposal is considered crucial to BZW's survival, with the bank unlikely to attract any new business while its ownership remains in doubt.

Staff remain irritated by the appointment of Goldman Sachs, which has put them in the position of having to give confidential client information to a rival firm. There continues to be surprise at the way the sale has been handled and the high risk of flagging up the intention to sell without first securing a buyer.

Commerzbank is expected to start cherry-picking key staff or teams from BZW to build its presence in London where it has lagged behind Deutsche Bank, which owns Morgan Grenfell, and Dresdner, parent of Kleinwort Benson.

There is thought to have been considerable interest in picking up parts of BZW, although senior insiders said yesterday they doubted whether a buyer could be found for all the businesses on sale at a decent price.

ING Barings and ABN Amro are seen as the leading contenders from continental Europe, with Credit Suisse, which has offices close to BZW's in Canary Wharf in London's Docklands, also mentioned. Credit Suisse is seen by analysts as a logical parent for BZW, with its strength in Europe balanced by the British firm's strength in UK equities.

The balance of probability is understood, however, to have swung towards a US buyer with JP Morgan a possibility and Travelers, owner of Smith Barney and now Salomon Brothers, an outside bet. Travelers yesterday refused to comment on a press report that it had had informal discussions with BZW before settling on a takeover of Salomon.

## NatWest organises \$5.5bn securitisation

NatWest Group securitised \$5.5bn of high-quality, low-margin corporate loans yesterday in order to free up £200m to £250m of capital from its balance sheet. The bank used a special financial vehicle called Rose (Repeat Offering Securitisation Entity) and it follows the such securitisation last October, when NatWest repackaged 200 loans made to companies in 17 countries totalling \$5bn. The process is well known in the US but new to the UK. "The deal has gone very well. We have a very healthy level of subscription across the tranches," said NatWest Markets head of debt syndicate, Steve Jones. The 12-tranche offering, issued in a mix of floating-rate dollar and sterling bonds, had been touted around the markets since mid-September, giving NatWest plenty of time to build a solid international order book, dealers said. The low returns available on capital invested in corporate loans has long been a source of frustration for banks. But they cannot afford to turn such business away because they need to maintain client relationships for fees generated in other areas.

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## Britton rejects 'unacceptably low' bid

Britton, the paper and packaging group, called a proposed £167m offer by Carastar Industries "unacceptably low" and said it would ask shareholders to reject such a bid. Carastar, a Georgia-based paperboard company, said yesterday it approached the UK carton and packaging company seeking a recommendation for a possible cash bid of 120p a share. That is a 41 per cent premium to Britton's closing share price yesterday, yet below the 52-week high of 156p set in November. Competition and the strength of the pound have eroded Britton's profit and undermined its shares.

## Shares in Vanguard Medica jump

Shares in Vanguard Medica, the biotechnology company founded by some of the biggest names in drug development, jumped 5 per cent yesterday to 447.5p following news that the company had licensed its second most important product to a leading Japanese pharmaceutical company. Vanguard Medica, floated at 450p in May last year by scientists including Sir David Jack, who discovered Zantac, Glaxo Wellcome's anti-ulcer blockbuster, has licensed the rights to its drug for hyperphosphataemia, a condition causing brittle bones in patients on kidney dialysis, to Sankyo, a Japanese specialist in kidney disease.

## Transfer pricing document attacked

Accountants attacked the Inland Revenue's long-awaited consultative document on bringing the complex issue of transfer pricing into the self-assessment regime as unduly burdensome and difficult to understand. Under the proposals published last night, multinational companies with UK operations will face penalties that could double their tax bills if they fail to justify their accounting profits for intra-group transactions not made on an arm's length basis.

## Underperforming directors 'decreasing'

The proportion of UK directors receiving above-average pay despite below-average performance by their companies is falling, suggests a study of executive compensation prepared by accountants Price Waterhouse. The research based on published accounts data reveals that companies paying more than would be expected in view of their size and performance, accounted for only 10 per cent of the total, compared with 19 per cent last year. Meanwhile, the percentage of companies paying less than expected even though performance was higher than average, grew from 22 per cent to 31 per cent.

## Entergy

Yesterday's paper contained an article about the Government giving consent for Entergy to build a gas-fired power station in the Thames estuary. The necessary consent was in fact granted by the Department of Trade and Industry in September 1994.

## COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
British Drilling (P)	21.8m (19m)	1,006m (775,000)	3.97p (2.86p)	2.8p (2.6p)
BNM (P)	89.8m (97m)	5,52m (5,32m)	7.7p (12.4p)	5.0p (7.3p)
English & Overseas (P)	3.2m (5.3m)	52,000 (251,000)	0.07p (0.25p)	nil
House of Fraser (P)	345.2m (334.7m)	-1.8m (-13.8m)	-0.9p (-2.2p)	1.7p (1.7p)
Kier Group (P)	677.2m (614.6m)	8.6m (7.3m)	18.7p (18.1p)	4.8p (1.8p)
United Industries (P)	19.6m (25.5m)	1.42m (1.2m)	2.71p (2.27p)	0.85p (0.75p)
(P) - Profit (I) - Interest				





THE INVESTMENT COLUMN  
EDITED BY SAMEENA AHMAD

## House of Fraser improves its act

House of Fraser has been such a dismal performer since its flotation in 1994 that there was a feeling of relief yesterday that the department store group finally managed to deliver a set of results with no nasty surprises.

It may be too early to be sure of a sustained recovery from this company which has disappointed so often in the past.

But at least it looks as if the chairman, Brian McGowan, who offered to fall on his sword if there were any further slips, will not have to impale himself just yet.

True, the group made a pre-exceptional loss of £2.5m in the first half, but that was a considerable improvement on the £8.7m recorded in the same half last year.

A sales uplift of 3.8 per cent in the half and 5 per cent in current trading isn't bad, though it is not clear how much of this has come from the offloading of cut-price stock.

House of Fraser says its priority is to increase margins rather than drive sales and here the news was reasonably encouraging.

The gross margin rose by nearly a full percentage point. This was boosted by better sales of higher-margin own-branded ranges as opposed to the concessions on which House of Fraser always relied in the past.

Sales of the Lines range of own-label clothing, launched in late July, have exceeded the company's most optimistic expectations and should boost margins further. There remains much to be done, of course.

The remaining third of the "off strategy" stock which has troubled the company for so long will be offloaded by the end of the year, using up more of last year's chunky provisions. There are two unwanted stores in Eastbourne and Sheffield which the company hopes to sell but may have to close.

Staff turnover, which has been as high as 50 per cent in the stores and 40 per cent at head office, is falling, which should improve customer service.

And a store efficiency programme, which was completed for non-selling functions in March, will deliver cost savings of £10m a year.

## House of Fraser: At a glance

Market value: £500.4m, share price 216.5p (+1.5p)

Trading record	1995	1996	1997	96/97	97/98
Turnover (£m)	754.7	748.9	761.4	334.7	345.2
Pre-tax profits (£m)	28.0	14.3	(35.4)	(13.6)	(1.6)
Earnings per share (p)	8.2	5.0	(11.9)	(4.3)	(0.6)
Dividends per share (p)	5.5	5.5	5.5	1.7	1.7

## Gross profit-margin rate

%

1996/97 1997/98 Half year

Own bought merchandise Concessions

40 35 30 25 20 15 10 5 0

1994 1995 1996 1997

## Share price

pence

230 220 210 200 190 180 170 160 150 140 130

1994 1995 1996 1997

The shares, floated at 180p, closed 1.5p higher at 216.5p yesterday and on UBS's full-year profit forecast of £27.8m they trade on a forward rating of 25. Too risky to make the shares worth chasing.

## Ted Baker makes a name for itself

Ralph Lauren, Gucci, Armani... Ted Baker? If Ray Kelvin, founding chief executive of Ted Baker, is right, his men's casual clothing label will soon have the instant brand recognition enjoyed by these gilt-edged names.

Mr Kelvin certainly has thechutzpah associated with the world of high fashion. Not only did he float his company at 20 times earnings, above the retail sector average, but he netted almost £16m from the deal. That and the fact that the company raised almost no new money has left the market wary.

Floated at 135p on 24 July, Ted Baker's shares initially soared to a high of 150.5p, but slipped 4.5p to 146p yesterday despite strong maiden interim sales to August grew 50 per cent to £8.9m with underlying profits up one-third to £2.2m.

Mr Kelvin is keen to emphasise that Ted Baker is a label wholesaler, not a retailer, even though 60 per cent of its sales are from its handful of shops and concessions. Wholesaling, which grew sales by 94 per cent in the half year, means lower overheads than the average retailer and better margins.

Ted Baker enjoys 30 per cent net returns. It also means expansion abroad is less risky.

Mr Kelvin's biggest problem is convincing the market that Ted Baker has the staying power to become an international brand. Mr Kelvin is correctly creating scarcity value by strictly rationing the clothes to a handful of independent retailers.

The rich and shameless seem to appreciate Baker's unusual fabrics and colours - Tom Cruise, Jack Nicholson and Tony Blair's children are all customers. With the average price of a shirt at £50, Ted Baker's position as an affordable label looks attractive too.

All that is reflected in the very good interim figures. However only a few labels will ever gain the mystique and durability of Armani, and there only time will tell. Mr Kelvin is building the brand by expanding into formal wear, women's wear and suits, but that risks diluting the name before it is established.

lished. On Charterhouse Tilney's £5.6m full-year forecast, the shares are on a forward p/e ratio of 16 for 1997 and 13 next year. Undemanding at these levels, but unproven too.

## Kier constructs a solid future

Shares in construction group Kier are a rare commodity. At flotation almost a year ago, employees held just over 80 per cent of the company's shares. Today about 70 per cent of stock is still in staff hands. So far, hanging on to Kier shares has paid off. The group floated at 170p and its share price yesterday closed at 221.5p, 6p up on the day following a strong set of preliminary results. Pre-tax profits for the year to June rose 17.8 per cent to £8.6m.

Kier is less dependent on the vagaries of the property market than many companies in this sector. In the home and properties division, one-third of group pre-tax profits, Kier has two companies, house-builder Twigden Homes and commercial property developer Kier Ventures.

Though the ups and downs of the housing market clearly impact upon Twigden Homes, the company's property books reduce its reliance on the open land market. Kier Ventures has a number of low-risk projects in the bag, such as the construction of a fully pre-let retail park in Canterbury, which reduces its exposure to cyclical fluctuations.

Kier's second arm is construction, consisting of three divisions. Kier Regional looks after small UK construction projects and, with a growing list of clients, is performing well. Kier National, which carries out larger projects, has been hit by a downturn in road-building, though involvement in the Private Finance Initiative could mean an inflow of profits in the medium term. The third division, property management, has had a good year and is growing quickly. Turnover is set to double following Tuesday's £4.5m acquisition of FM Contract Services.

All in all, the future at Kier looks solid. Forecasts put the company on a forward rating of about 10.5 times, below average for the sector.

Given prospects, this looks like good value.

## PEOPLE &amp; BUSINESS

## JOHN WILLCOCK



Paul Manduca, chief executive of Threadneedle Asset Management and one of the City's fund management grandees, is to chair the committee overseeing a new investment product which will track the FTSE 100 index.

The Offering Circular for the new securities, called FTSE 100 Trains, was launched yesterday. The intriguing name derives from Threadneedle Securities. Perhaps the marketing people at HSBC James Capel, who dreamt the idea up, should sell them under the slogan: "They'll go like a train." Or something like that.

Mr Manduca says: "They will be very tradeable bits of paper, buyable in the market. They're designed for small and medium-sized institutions who want a quick exposure to the FTSE."

The Threadneedle boss has been asked to act as an independent chairman for the new scheme. As well as heading Threadneedle, part of the BAT empire, he is a director of a Touce Remnant investment trust and sits on various "great and the good" committees, including the University Superannuation Scheme.

So, what is Threadneedle's view of the market at the moment? Mr Manduca says: "We are cautious about the US and UK markets, although a crash is not imminent. The danger is on the downside."

Nicholas Soames, the Bunteresque former Minister for the Armed Forces, has been appointed a non-executive director of Network Technology, a hi-tech start-up he discovered on a constituency visit before the May election.

Network makes widgets which go into printing machines and which enable computers to talk to printers and vice versa. The company, based in Burgess Hill, Sussex, floated on AIM last year and supplies Japanese printing machine-makers.

When I phoned Mr Soames's office yesterday I was told he was in a helicopter on his way to see the Amber Foundation, a youth employment charity of which he is a trustee, based in a stately home near Marlborough. He had left a statement, however, saying: "I am delighted to be appointed as a non-executive director of Network Technology. They are a company at the

forefront of their industry in one of the most exciting fields of technology and enterprise."

Ray Kelvin, chief executive and founder of London-based casual shirt makers Ted Baker, got pretty effusive yesterday about the future of the company as he announced its first post-flotation results. Not surprising, perhaps, since he trousered a £3m payment and sold £13m worth of shares during the float 10 weeks ago.

Speaking about the company's trademark casual shirt, called the Ted, Mr Kelvin said: "Men buy the Ted. They don't want to call it a shirt. Ted has a lot of personality, humour and mystery."

Then Mr Kelvin said: "You never see Ted." Eh? "Does that mean you are the brand?" I asked him. "I'm the closest one to him," the by now transported Mr Kelvin replied. The company also sells a formal range of men's shirts, the Edward Baker range. "He [Edward] doesn't like to be called Ted," Mr Kelvin said. I'll make sure I won't.

The people over at City law firm Nicholson Graham & Jones have been busy bees. Partner Alan Langbehn has been advising Dame Shirley Porter in her action against District Auditor John Magill, while Piers Coleman has been advising Liberal Democrat MP Mark Oaten on the Winchester election case. The firm, which merged with West End solicitors Brecher & Co, also represents the property developers Godfrey Bradman and Gerald Ronson.

Fuace-faced apologies to Richard Branson and Lord Putnam, two members of the Government's taskforce for the creative industries. I wrote yesterday that the great retailer and the movie mogul failed to attend the launch. In fact they were at the launch meeting, just not at the press briefing. The nation can breathe again.

Christopher Hampson, chairman of RMC Group, is joining what used to be British Gas, now called BG, as a non-executive director. Canadian by birth, Mr Hampson spent almost all his working life with ICI and retired from the group three years ago. He is non-executive chairman of RMC and a former chairman of Yorkshire Electricity Group. He also sits on the board of the UK Government Environmental Agency.

"I'm picking up a Tricorder reading, Captain," is a catchphrase from *Star Trek*. I had not realised until yesterday, however, that there is a British company called Tricorder Technology which makes 3D digital scanners for use with personal computers. And yes, they took the name from the TV show. Three non-executive directors of the company have been appointed to high-profile posts in other companies.

Dr Robert Hawley, who has just retired as chief executive of British Energy, has been appointed chairman of the Council of Durham University. Dr John Forrest has joined the main board of venture capital group 3i and Anne Glover has co-founded Amadeus, a venture capital fund whose investors include Microsoft. That's it - beam me up.

## Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	10000		
Australia	2222	2225	2225
Canada	6849	6854	6854
Denmark	1679	1677	1677
France	1669	1669	1669
Germany	1669	1669	1669
Italy	1669	1669	1669
Japan	1669	1669	1669
Netherlands	1669	1669	1669
New Zealand	1669	1669	1669
Portugal	1669	1669	1669
Spain	1669	1669	1669
Sweden	1669	1669	1669
Switzerland	1669	1669	1669
US	1669	1669	1669

## Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month
Argentina	1669		
Brazil	1669		
China	1669		
India	1669		
Indonesia	1669		
South Africa	1669		
Taiwan	1669		
Thailand	1669		
Turkey	1669		
US	1669		

## Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Rate	Rate
UK	7.00%		
France	5.50%		
Germany	5.50%		
Italy	5.50%		
Japan	5.50%		
Netherlands	5.50%		
New Zealand	5.50%		
Portugal	5.50%		
Spain	5.50%		
Sweden	5.50%		
Switzerland	5.50%		
US	5.50%		

## Money Market Rates

Country	Rate	Rate	Rate
UK	7.00%		
France	5.50%		
Germany	5.50%		
Italy	5.50%		
Japan	5.50%		
Netherlands	5.50%		
New Zealand	5.50%		
Portugal	5.50%		
Spain	5.50%		
Sweden	5.50%		
Switzerland	5.50%		
US	5.50%		

## Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor volume	Open interest
Long GB	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long US	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Japan	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Europe	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Asia	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Australia	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long New Zealand	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long South Africa	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Taiwan	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Thailand	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Turkey	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long US	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50

## Life FTSE 100 Index Options

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor volume	Open interest
Long GB	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long US	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Japan	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Europe	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Asia	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Australia	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long New Zealand	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long South Africa	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Taiwan	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Thailand	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Turkey	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long US	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50

## Commodity Indices

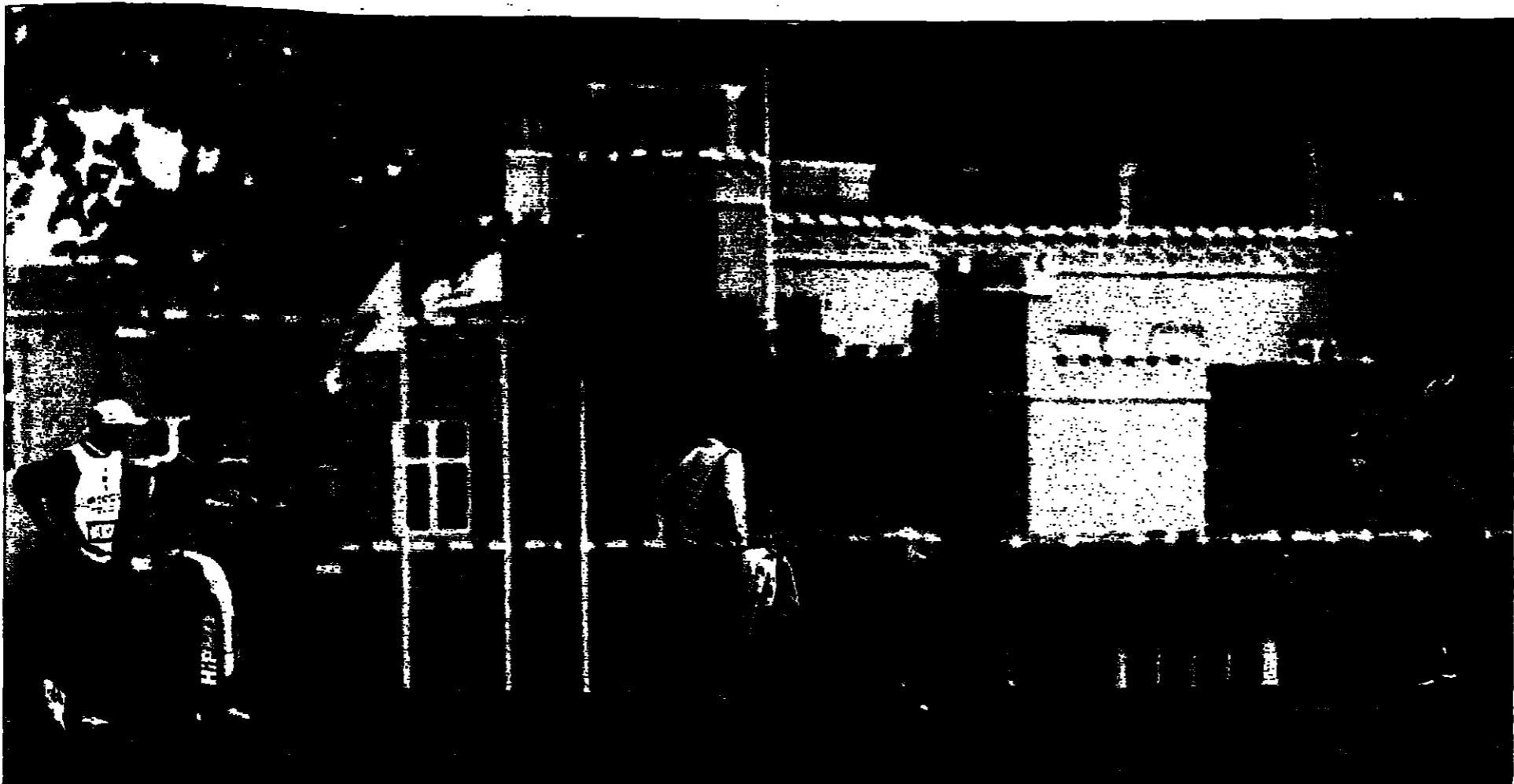
Index	Base date	2000	1990	1980	1970	1960	1950	1940	1930	1920	1910	1900	1890	1880	1870	1860	1850	1840	1830	1820	1810	1800	1790	1780	1770	1760	1750	1740	1730	1720	1710	1700	1690	1680	1670	1660	1650	1640	1630	1620	1610	1600	1590	1580	1570	1560	1550	1540	1530	1520	1510	1500	1490	1480	1470	1460	1450	1440	1430	1420	1410	1400	1390	1380	1370	1360	1350	1340	1330	1320	1310	1300	1290	1280	1270	1260	1250	1240	1230	1220	1210	1200	1190	1180	1170	1160	1150	1140	1130	1120	1110	1100	1090	1080	1070	1060	1050	1040	1030	1020	1010	1000	990	980	970	960	950	940	930	920	910	900	890	880	870	860	850	840	830	820	810	800	790	780	770	760	750	740	730	720	710	700	690	680	670	660	650	640	630	620	610	600	590	580	570	560	550	540	530	520	510	500	490	480	470	460	450	440	430	420	410	400	390	380	370	360	350	340	330	320	310	300	290	280	270	260	250	240	230	220	210	200	190	180	170	160	150	140	130	120	110	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10	0
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## Commodity Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor volume	Open interest
Long GB	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long US	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Japan	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Europe	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Asia	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Australia	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long New Zealand	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long South Africa	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Taiwan	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Thailand	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Turkey	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long US	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50

## Industrial Metals

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor volume	Open interest
Long GB	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long US	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Japan	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Europe	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Asia	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Australia	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long New Zealand	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long South Africa	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Taiwan	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18.50
Long Thailand	Dec-97	18.50	18.50	18.50	18



Jesper Parnevik (right) takes his second shot on the first hole at Wentworth yesterday while Ian Woosnam (second left) looks on

Photograph: David Ashdown

## Faxon plays it straight down the middle

The Ryder Cup lives on in the memory, but Brad Faxon, a member of the defeated American team, is determined to play down talk of grudge matches or revenge at this week's Toyota World Match Play Championship, as Andy Farrell reports from Wentworth.

It would be hard to describe Brad Faxon as being on a mission of vengeance at the Toyota World Match Play. But having beaten one member of Europe's Ryder Cup team in Darren Clarke, the American now has the opportunity to defeat the man who sealed his

country's defeat at Valderrama, Colin Montgomerie.

Clarke, who lost 2 and 1, discovered that having an off-putting day against the so-called best putter in the world, even not performing to Faxon's usual high standard, still spelled defeat. Attempts to build today's encounter into a grudge match fared no better.

During the Ryder Cup, quotes from a newspaper interview by Colin Montgomerie about some of the US players were given prominence on American television. Observations that Faxon is not the straightest of hitters are nothing new, but reference to the American's divorce has brought outraged e-mails from across the Atlantic to Montgomerie's home page on the Internet.

Faxon, though, would not be

drawn. "I've spoken to Colin. I know how things can be twisted," he said. "We get on well. I think he is pretty funny. It would be nice to win, but it isn't going to get the Ryder Cup back for America." As he got up, with the broadest of grins, he added: "But Monty's a jerk. Is that what you want?"

The man with the problem, or opportunity, of taking on Ernie Els today falls to Ian Woosnam. On a blustery morning, he produced the best golf of the first round with an approximate 68. It was only good enough for a one-hole lead over Jesper Parnevik, but after lunch he cruised to a 4 and 3 victory.

There may be no Tiger Woods at Wentworth, but there was a Tegra wood, or driver, on display. Woosnam was using one for the first time, after try-

ing 14 different variations of the club in practice last week.

The new design, developed by a NASA scientist, has a shaft attached nearer the middle of the clubhead. The theory is that it prevents a typical hacker's slice. "It's to help amateurs to draw the ball," Woosnam said. "It's just what I need." The added benefit is extra length.

"I hit it so easy and it went a long way. It's been pretty depressing seeing these young guys hit it so far past you. I'm looking forward to the challenge of playing Ernie. He is not going to make many mistakes," the Welshman added.

Although everything pales in comparison with the Ryder Cup, there was not a great deal on the opening day for the gallery to get excited about. But

the beauty of matchplay is that the state of a match can create drama. Yesterday's best contest was between Phil Mickelson and Frank Nobilo, who won at the second extra hole.

Nobilo had been four up after 12 holes, but the American fought back and the New Zealander found himself one down playing the last after he drove out of bounds at the 17th for the second time in the day. But when Mickelson tipped out from 12 feet at 18, Nobilo got a reprieve and sealed the match by hitting his tee shot at the short second hole to a foot.

The usual role at this event of Oriental Spice was this year played by Tsukasa Watanabe, a player ranked 169th in the world. What he really, really wanted was to become the first Japanese representative to

reach the second round since Joe Ozaki beat Ben Crenshaw 7 and 6 in 1986. Unfortunately, Vijay Singh, last year's beaten finalist and rated 154 places above Watanabe, proved too strong and won 4 and 3.

TOYOTA WORLD MATCH PLAY CHAMPIONSHIP (Wentworth, J Parnevik (Swi) lost to I Woosnam (GB) 4 and 3; P Mickelson (US) lost to F Nobilo (NZ) at 30th; B Faxon (US) lost to D Clarke (GB) 2 and 1; V Singh (Pak) lost to T Watanabe (Japan) 4 and 3.

● Seve Ballesteros and Jose Maria Olazabal, together again for the first time since winning the Novotel Perrier Pairs tournament two years ago, shot a four-under-par 67 in the first round of this year's edition of the event in Bordeaux to end the day three shots off the lead. Each pair plays a fourball on the second, a greensomes on the third and all players play as individuals on the fourth.

## MOTOR RACING

### Serene Villeneuve close to realising his life's ambition

Jacques Villeneuve needs to finish just one point ahead of Michael Schumacher in Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix in Suzuka to win the world championship. David Tremayne on the home straight of a fascinating contest.

To watch them sitting together yesterday afternoon, neither Jacques Villeneuve nor Michael Schumacher appeared to have a care in the world. When the German was asked if Japan's balmy weather would work as much to his advantage as the rain that deluged the Japanese Grand Prix three years ago, he smiled breezily and said: "The good weather suits us both. I can keep my sun-tan, and Jacques can keep his hair light."

Considering that the world championship is at stake, both men seemed remarkably at ease, a marked contrast to last year when Damon Hill looked as twitchy as Villeneuve was serene.

One year on, Villeneuve looks like a man who expects to deliver. Little more than a month ago Schumacher was the hot favourite to take a third title, as Ferrari's performances pushed him into a comfortable lead in the points table. But the last two races were disastrous. An illegal overtaking move in Austria cost him dearly, and the antics of his brother Ralf removed him from contention in Germany a week later. Villeneuve won both races to vault back into the lead.

"It felt great," he said. "Those races put us back where we started the season. We started working well again within the team, and it all fell into place. Michael and Ferrari didn't have good weekends, but

then we have had some bad ones too which didn't go to plan, and some that we threw away. It was just a case of going for it. We didn't have a choice."

Though he has won seven races to Schumacher's four, it has not been an easy season. His brash manner has not always sat well with Williams' very English management team, and there have been frequent head-on clashes over the chassis set-up. "After the first few races we had been too competitive and we relaxed," Villeneuve suggested. "And a lot of work was done on the 1998 car. So it took us time to react when Ferrari suddenly came on. After Monaco there was a lot of pressure, and it became a constant battle."

Schumacher smiled ironically at this, having recently seen Ferrari's edge blunted. While Villeneuve now has the mien of a man who knows just how close he is to realising his ambition, Schumacher looks more like the pragmatist whose gamble has come up one jack short of a royal flush. "I'm going to be driving as hard as I have been all season," he said. "But with my other championships I was leading going into the last races. Here I am now the one who has to overtake."

He said he had prepared for the race by playing strategy games and cards with Ralf, whose first corner move at the Nürburgring might well have lost him the title. Villeneuve, by contrast, went sightseeing.

The odds decidedly favour him, and Schumacher knows better than anyone just what a mountain he has to climb. "Even if we don't win the championship," he said, "we have fulfilled our expectations this season. But if the chance is there, sure I will go for it." But he knows that, all things being equal, he can only win the title if Villeneuve loses it.

THE INDEPENDENT

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## CRICKET

### Saqlain sticks to his task

Henry Blofeld reports from Rawalpindi  
Pakistan 456  
South Africa 359-6

South Africa had no trouble in avoiding the follow-on but there was a flurry of excitement in the afternoon when five wickets fell for 61, taking their score to 382 for 6. The damage was done by the off-spin of Saqlain Mushtaq, who has bowled beautifully throughout the long South African innings.

He finished the day with figures of 5 for 126 and he would not have been flattered if he had picked up two or three more wickets. His leg-spinning colleague, Mushtaq Ahmed, who toiled away at the other end for much of the day, finished without a wicket.

The slow pitch did not make life easy for bowlers or batsmen. There was nothing in it for the

fast bowlers and whenever the spinners caused problems the ball came through so slowly that the batsmen had time to adjust.

At the start of the day South Africa needed 118 more to avoid the follow-on and in the morning Gary Kirsten and Jacques Kallis took no risks, picking up what runs were offered. There was one memorable stroke when Kirsten came down the pitch to Mushtaq and drove him through extra cover for four. They were still together at lunch, having put on 66 from 29 overs.

The score had reached 221 for 1 and Kallis had made his highest Test score, 61, when he played back to one which Saqlain bowled from round the wicket and was leg before. Seven runs later, when two short of his hundred, Kirsten followed one which the off-spinner turned more sharply and was caught in the gully.

Then, at 249, Daryl Cullinan

was most unlucky to be given lbw to Saqlain to a ball which clearly pitched outside the leg stump. The follow-on was then saved before Hanse Cronje cut Azhar Mahmood to backward point and Brian McMillan was caught at slip off the back of the bat sweeping at Saqlain.

But Shaun Pollock and David Richardson, both competent batsmen, then made sure Pakistan did not gain too big a lead with an unbroken seventh-wicket stand of 77 against bowlers who were tiring.

Fourth day, Pakistan won toss  
PAKISTAN - First innings 456 (Azhar Mahmood 58 not out, Ali Nazki 75, Mushtaq Ahmed 55, S M Pollock 5-76, A A Donald 5-103)  
SOUTH AFRICA - First innings (Overnight: 138 for 9)  
G Kirsten c Kallis b Saqlain 46  
J H Kallis lbw Saqlain 61  
D J Cullinan b Saqlain 36  
W J Cronje c Kallis b Azhar 34  
S M Pollock c Kallis b Saqlain 7  
S M Pollock not out 30  
D J Richardson not out 30  
Extras 6 (lb 3, bb 3, no ball 4)  
Total (for 9) 359-6  
Fall (overs): 2-221, 3-228, 4-248, 5-278, 6-282  
No ball: P L Symcox, A A Donald, B N Schultz  
Bowling: Mushtaq Ahmed 20-6-45-2, Azhar Mahmood 21-1-57-1 (4 not out), Mushtaq Ahmed 20-5-40-0, Saqlain Mushtaq 18-7-125-5 (4 not out), S M Pollock 10-3-40-0, D J Richardson 10-3-40-0 and David Azhar (not out)

## BASEBALL

### Red faces for the Indians

The Baltimore Orioles started well in their attempt to reach a World Series since 1983, taming the Cleveland Indians 3-0 in the first game of the American League Championship Series.

Scott Erickson led the way for the Orioles by pitching a four-hitter on Wednesday night for the first shut-out of the 1997 post-season. Brady Anderson chipped in with his speciality, a lead-off homer off Chad Ogea, and Roberto Alomar followed up with a two-run shot in the third innings that effectively ended the contest.

After a wobbly end to the regular season, Baltimore are once again firing on all cylinders. In the best-of-five divisional series, the AL East champions brushed aside the Seattle Mariners 3-1, handing two rare defeats to Randy Johnson, normally baseball's most overpowering pitcher.

In the National League, where Atlanta are chasing their fifth pennant in seven years, the Braves stoned for a sloppy opener by thrashing the Florida Marlins 7-1 to square the best-of-seven series at 1-1.

On Tuesday, three simple fielding errors handed the Marlins five unearned runs and a 5-3 win. A day later, however, normal service resumed as the red-outable Braves pitching - this time it was John Smoltz's - gave up just three hits.

NATIONAL LEAGUE Play-off: Atlanta Braves 7 Florida Marlins 1 (seven innings, Marlins lead 7-1). AMERICAN LEAGUE Play-off: Baltimore Orioles 3 Cleveland Indians 0 (Baltimore lead seven games series 4-0).

- Rupert Cornwell

## RUGBY LEAGUE

### Lowe swells ranks of Great Britain's chiefs

Whatever deficiencies might yet be exposed among the infantry, Great Britain will go into their series against Australia next month with no shortage of generals. Already blessed with three coaches and a technical director, the national squad yesterday acquired a team manager, with the reappointment of Phil Lowe to the role he filled on tour last year.

The former Test forward managed the Lions on their difficult trip to Papua New Guinea, Fiji and New Zealand and was thought to have handed in his notice when he was critical of the League's decision to send home 10 players as a cost-cutting measure. Yet Lowe's stance meant that he retained the respect of the players, so he is a sensible choice

to head the management team for a demanding series.

That team already includes a head coach in Andy Goodway, with back-up from Shaun McRae and Daryl Powell, with the technical director, Joe Lydon, overseeing the preparations for the series rather than take on the team manager's role.

- Dave Hadfield

## ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.

Draw date: 8/10/97. The winning numbers: 3, 4, 7, 23, 34, 43. Bonus number: 15.  
Total Sales: £28,931,948. Prize Fund: £14,826,224 (45% of ticket sales plus £1,606,848 Superdraw funding).

CATEGORY	NO. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT FOR EACH WINNER	TOTAL EACH TIER
Match 6 (Jackpot)	8	£625,000	£5,000,000
Match 5 plus bonus ball	27	£38,668	£1,044,036
Match 5	1,537	£424	£651,688
Match 4	43,113	£33	£1,422,729
Match 3	649,498	£10	£6,494,980
TOTAL	694,093		£14,612,533

© Camelot Group plc. Players must be 16 or over.

Breakage (prizes rounded down to nearest £1): £13,601.

ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

In the event of any discrepancy in the above, the data contained in Camelot's central computer system shall prevail.

مكتبة من الأدب

هنا من أصل

## Spectre of doping returns to haunt racing

Doping, the greatest threat to racing's integrity, has returned. Two badly-beaten horses have tested positive for a prohibited substance and a six-month old Jockey Club inquiry is still trying to track down the perpetrators. Richard Edmondson reports.

The failure of one of the horses beaten in the latest spate of doping to hit racing, Lively Knight, almost caused an exodus of horses from Josh Gifford's Findon yard. The bay gelding was a 1-7 favourite for a three-runner novice chase at Plumpton in late March, but was a beaten horse from three fences out.

The good to firm ground was forwarded as an explanation by

some for Lively Knight's capitulation, even though he had won on good going earlier in the campaign. Gifford, though, had no idea why his runner, 50th clear of the winner, Stormhill Pilgrim, on the official ratings, should have run so badly.

Gifford's biggest problem transpired to be the riding arrangements. Lively Knight was partnered by Leighton Aspell, his yard's conditional jockey, while Stormhill Pilgrim was a spare ride for Philip Hyde, the stable's retained jockey.

This coincidence upset Alan Weller, the owner of the runner-up and, in the immediate aftermath, he threatened to remove all his horses from Gifford, including the promising Boardroom Shuffle. Gifford said yesterday: "He now says he never talked about taking his horses away, but I can assure you he did. All this tells us what really happened that day."

For much of this year the Jockey Club has been conducting a covert operation in West Sussex and only recently has Gifford considered the magnitude his glass has lifted from him and his team.

The trainer added: "It's very worrying. We have been investigated, or interrogated if you like, for the last six months. We were told to keep quiet and they would be doing undercover work to find out who did this. I am 100 per cent behind my staff and, as far as I am concerned, they have got

nothing whatsoever to do with this."

Gifford's disbelief about the culpability is matched by his incredulity at the race they tried

**RICHARD EDMONDSON**  
NAP: City Hall  
(Ascot 5.20)  
NB: Demolition Jo  
(Ascot 3.40)

to fix. He said: "I can't believe that anyone can make so much money on a little, three-runner race at Plumpton. I'm not a gambling man myself, but I

can't believe there are that many people around who want to back a 1-7 shot. And, if anyone had tried to get on any of the other two with serious money, the bookmakers would have squealed immediately. So I don't understand it, though they must have found something."

The Jockey Club have yet to confirm that the same substance was found in Lively Knight as Charlie Egerton's Avanti Express, who was drugged when pulled up at Exeter three weeks earlier. Even

the greatest believers in coincidence will struggle to deduce that the incidents are unconnected, however.

Certainly the two cases are linked by betting patterns. In Lively Knight's case, Cruise Control was backed from 12-1 to 6-1, though ironically he was not the outsider to benefit from the favourite's strange effort. Avanti Express weakened badly in the market, and was eventually overtaken in the betting by Give And Take, who was the subject of some thick bets before succeeding. Avanti Express was struggling from some way out and was eventually pulled up with three 100-1 shots in front of him.

Jamie Osborne, who rode Avanti Express, said yesterday: "He was lifeless after a couple of furlongs and walking around at the start he was lifeless."

The Jockey Club confirmed yesterday that both horses test-

ed positive for drugs, but after that there was little further confirmation or information on any level. "We can confirm that a security department investigation is under way and they have been investigating since the horses tested positive, between two weeks and a month after the race," David Pipe, a spokesman, said. "But the name of the drug used will not be released until after the investigation is completed and I can't confirm the two cases are linked."

It seems, however, that they must be and it could be the incidents are also knotted to Britain's last great doping cases of 1990. Bevefoot and Norwich were both beaten at Doncaster's St Leger meeting and Flying Diva at Yarmouth the following week, all three victims of the sedative Acetylprozamide. The perpetrators are still at large.

One of Goss's main adversaries will be Eric Tabary, the famous Frenchman who has come out of retirement at 63 to team up with Yves Parlier on the radical Aquitaine Innovations.

WHITBREAD RACING THE WORLD RACE first leg, 7,250 miles, Southampton to Cape Town, 2-3 (Language) (Saw) P. 1997-98; 2. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 3. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 4. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 5. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 6. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 7. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 8. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 9. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 10. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 11. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 12. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 13. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 14. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 15. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 16. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 17. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 18. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 19. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 20. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 21. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 22. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 23. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 24. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 25. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 26. M. Goss (Merricks) G. 1997-98; 27. M. 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## England's day of the 'dirty thieves'

It has been 36 years since England's footballers last beat the Italians on their home soil. Here some of the victors of that historic match recall how a broken nose and swaggering contempt played into England's hands.

Amid the miscellaneous excitements of a memory John Haynes shares with nine other past England footballers is an incident that brought down the wrath of 90,000 Italian supporters.

Recalling England's 3-2 victory at the Olympic Stadium in Rome on 24 May 1961 – their last against the Azzurri on Italian soil – and anticipating my sceptical response to the uncharacteristic image he was about to put forward, Haynes said: "We were level 1-1 but right up against it early in the second half when I collided with their goalkeeper Buffon going for a through ball."

"You went for a through ball!" I said.

Haynes chuckled. "Yes, I went for a through ball," he replied. "Anyway, Buffon had to go off with a broken nose and was replaced by a youngster (Giuseppe Vavassori, making his international debut) who looked very nervous. The crowd wouldn't accept that Buffon's injury was an accident and they really gave it to me, shrieking abuse and threats."

"Mind you, losing Buffon didn't seem to affect Italy's confidence because they continued to give us the run-around and it took three marvellous saves by Ron Springett to keep us in the match."

In the press box, Frank McGhee, then of the *Daily Mirror*, couldn't take his eyes off

the Juventus inside-forward Omar Sivori who had turned out for Argentina before becoming available to Italy under a now defunct rule of residence.

"There was a nasty streak in Sivori," McGhee said, "but what a player. He could dribble, pass, shoot and had great imagination. That day Sivori was on his own, causing havoc all over the place."

Sivori's 44th-minute equaliser, five minutes after the late Gerry Hitchens had opened the scoring, fired him up for a second-half performance that caused McGhee to suppose that England's run of six victories and one draw, including a 9-3 thrashing of Scotland at Wembley, would end in disappointment.



BY KEN JONES

"Losing their goalkeeper was a big blow to Italy and would prove crucial, but when Brighenti finally broke Springett's resistance in the 75th-minute I imagined England losing by three or four goals," he added.

Sivori, squat and swarthy, was everywhere, but his swaggering contempt for the opposition carried the seeds of its own destruction.

England's right-back, Jimmy Armfield, now a technical consultant to the Football Association, said: "When Sivori started taking the mickey instead of getting on with the game I began to feel that we might still get something. Ron [Springett] was in tremendous form – one save from Italy's outside right Mora was as good as any I've ever seen,

including Gordon Banks' from Pele in 1970 – and whenever I played with Jimmy Greaves I expected him to score."

Before the match, Greaves' response to speculation over a transfer from Chelsea to Milan had been dismissive. "It was pretty obvious that a deal had been struck and that Jimmy was trying to wriggle out of it," McGhee said. "He confirmed this the next day when England moved on for a game against Austria in Vienna, but he'd done enough in Rome to make Milan even more determined to sign him."

Shortly after Italy went ahead Greaves raced back to help disposess Sivori and won a throw-in. He took it himself, picked up a return pass and set off for goal. When two defenders closed in Greaves slipped the ball through to Hitchens, who equalised with a shot that passed between the nervous new goalkeeper's legs for a 75th-minute equaliser.

Armfield said: "I can still see the Italian players looking at each other in disbelief and I was then convinced that if our luck held we'd beat them. Of course there was nothing like as much at stake as there will be when England play Italy in Rome on Saturday, but with the 1962 World Cup finals only 12 months off, our manager, Walter Winterbottom, stressed how important it was to remain unbeaten."

Haynes, now living in Edinburgh, could not recall exactly how England's winning goal came, but it was his trademark through ball five minutes from time that provided Greaves with a perfect opportunity. "A classic Greaves situation, on his own, with no one in tackling distance and only a now-terrified goalkeeper to beat," McGhee reported. "It is hardly necessary to add that he scored...low and hard with a left-foot shot."

The Olympic Stadium, for those madding thousands of Italian supporters, had become a place of gross injustice. "I didn't like the sound of them – somebody told me afterwards that they were chanting 'dirty thieves' – so I was astonished to hear the skipper [Haynes] suggesting that we do a lap of honour. 'Are you mad,' I said. 'If we get too close to this lot they won't let us out of here alive.'"

The mood of Italy's supporters hadn't improved by the time England left the stadium. "It was still ugly," Haynes said. "They crowded around our bus shouting and throwing things un-

til the police made way for us. We had plenty to celebrate and later there was quite a party."

Five days later England lost 3-1 in Vienna. "We still had to make sure of qualifying for the World Cup, so I could understand Walter wanting to have a look at other players," Armfield said, "but it might have been better to keep the same team."

"The lads who came in [Brian Miller in midfield for Bobby Robson and John Angus in place of Mick McNeil at left back] did well enough, but after the events of Rome we never seemed to be up for it." Among the issues at stake

was whether Bobby Charlton would at last realise his potential. Unsure of how to get the best out of an immensely gifted footballer, England and Manchester United used him on the left wing, the position he filled in Rome and where he continued to play until transformed by Alf Ramsey's idea of operating in close support of the strikers.

When England won the World Cup five years later, Charlton was the only one of the five survivors from Rome in Ramsey's squad to be selected for the final against West Germany. Armfield, Springett and

Ron Flowers didn't appear at all, and Greaves couldn't budge either Geoff Hurst or Roger Hunt after dropping out with an injury.

Haynes' international career ended prematurely when a car crash shortly after leading England in the 1962 World Cup finals left him with a permanently damaged knee. Made England's first £100 per week footballer by his only professional club, Fulham, on the removal of the maximum wage in 1961, he won 56 caps and widespread acclaim as one of the game's creative players.

Reflecting further on the events of May 1961 he said: "As

the link players in a sort of 4-2-4 formation, Bob Robson and I were given a chasing. It's going back a long way but I remember that clearly. That and the collision with Buffon, whose nephew plays for Parma. And Jimmy Armfield's face when I suggested the lap of honour."

Haynes will watch tomorrow's match on television. So will McGhee whose retirement years are partly taken up by reporting for the *Observer*. He has a thought that England supporters may think disturbing. It is that in size and features Gianfranco Zola bears a resemblance to Sivori. Plays a lot like him too.



The sacking of Rome: Jimmy Greaves stuns the Azzurri by scoring England's winner against Italy in 1961

Photograph: Hulton Getty

## Pride and self-image at stake for a nation of football fundamentalists



Hail Cesare: Attilio Lombardo (left) and Enrico Chiesa look to coach Maldini's example yesterday. Photograph: AP

In Italy, it is less a national passion, more a second religion. Andrew Gumbel reports from Rome on why defeat tomorrow night would plunge the country into a depression excessive even by English standards.

Whose side is everybody on then? This is supposed to be a final showdown for a place in the World Cup, a bestial fight to the death between two European giants, but the Italian and English sides seem to be treating each other like brothers in arms, not mortal enemies. One day there is Gianluca Vialli, not so long ago one of the Italian national side's leading lights, sitting at home in London and predicting that England will win the group and qualify. The next day there is Tony Banks admitting he would

find it hard not to jump for joy if his idol, Gianfranco Zola, scored again in his own team.

These may be interpreted as unwise or inopportune outbursts, but times have unmistakably changed. In Rome, at least, as the clock ticks away towards the big game, there is an odd sense of familiarity about the visiting England team. Everybody knows exactly what they are facing. The experience of Zola and Co in England and, on the other side, Paul Gascoigne's and Paul Ince's exposure to the game in Italy, have made this match seem more like a derby than a major international stand-off.

The talk in the sports papers, in offices and buses, bars and restaurants, is all much the same. Italy may still be the stronger side, but they will face an England side who have matured considerably since losing at Wembley in March. The Italians may have the support of their home fans in the Stadio Olimpico, but they are also

starting out from a position of weakness, knowing that only an outright win will guarantee them a place in France.

Of the players, Zola has been particularly incisive in his analyses. "The English have improved tactically," he said this week during a training session in Florence. "They've got sneakier. Ever since they lost against us they've been devouring point after point, winning everything in sight... We need to forget the old England we used to know." Zola already has a good idea what awaits him out on the field: a ring of England players determined to stop him getting the ball. And his nomination for the man to watch out for? No hesitation there: Ian Wright.

There is something about all this inside knowledge that makes Italian fans uneasy. There have been worries circulating all week that the chumminess between the players will take the competitive edge off the Italian side. The two

teams may treat this as a contest between friendly rivals, but for ordinary football followers it is something far, far more important. Football is like a second religion here, and the very idea of a World Cup finals without Italy is a thought too appalling for most people to contemplate.

Mostly this is a question of pride. Italy is famously attached to its sense of self-image, especially when it comes to the way the country is viewed abroad. To miss out on the World Cup, a bit like missing out on the single European currency (the other great national preoccupation of the moment), is not just a lost opportunity. It is something that would make Italians feel as though they were losing an essential part of themselves.

Football is not just something that Italians watch. Indeed, they frequent their stadiums far less than the English do theirs. Rather it is something to follow, something to

talk about, something about which everyone can feel an expert and offer an opinion. The television is awash with football programmes – not so much the games themselves as endless talk shows in which performances, tactics, transfers and the rest are painstakingly analysed and argued over. The specialist newspapers, the *Gazzetta dello Sport* and the *Corriere dello Sport*, are by far the best-selling dailies in the country.

Football, it has been suggested, is the way ordinary Italians identify themselves with the byzantine structures that govern the country. They may be intimidated by politics or high culture, but football enables them to engage in the same sort of rhetorical flourishes, opinion-making and convoluted conspiratorial thinking that characterises the chattering classes without feeling that they are somehow talking out of turn.

This has been especially

true since the landmark World Cup victory of 1982, when football was transformed from a largely lower-class passion to a national obsession in which politicians, industrialists, writers and artists all felt obliged to play their part. It is impossible not to have an opinion on Internazionale's acquisition of Ronaldo, or on Cesare Maldini's track record as national coach, just as it is impossible in Britain not to have an opinion on the death of Princess Diana.

In a highly regionalised country in which north and south sometimes seem to be on separate continents, football is one of the few unifying factors. They are as nuts about it in remote villages in Sicily as in the elegant business salons of Milan and Turin. That helps explain why so much is riding on Saturday night, and why the streets of Italy will be deserted on Sunday in a gesture of national mourning if *gli azzurri*, the boys in the blue strip, don't get their three points.

### Wales look to youngsters

Wales coach Bobby Gould will take the principality's most inexperienced squad for years to play Belgium in Brussels tomorrow night.

Captain or not, much rests on Ryan Giggs, as Wales are without captain Gary Speed and Mark Hughes through suspension, and Gould will probably leave Neville Southall and Dean Saunders on the bench to give youth its head. That would mean Wales missing players with 259 caps between them against a Belgian side needing a win to reach the World Cup finals.

It seems likely Gould will throw keeper Paul Jones (one cap), Rob Edwards (one), Robbie Savage (one), Robert Page (four), Steve Jenkins (seven) and Ceri Hughes (seven) into the fray. Even the front two, Nathan Blake and John Hartson, with 17 caps between them, are hardly brimming over with experience. A crash course in international football is on the cards.

### Adams makes swift return at Swansea

Micky Adams' life in the game took a turn for the better yesterday when he was appointed manager of Swansea City. He replaces Jan Molby, who was sacked by the Welsh club on Tuesday.

Adams has endured a bizarre fortnight. Last week he was unceremoniously dumped from Fulham to make way for the Cottagers' new management team of Kevin Keegan and Ray Wilkins.

The former Sheffield United and Wimbledon striker Alan Cork will be Adams' assistant, with the former Southampton and Reading manager Ian Branfoot as his chief scout.

Back at Adams' old Thameside home, Wilkins was set to complete his first signing, Sunderland's 35-year-old midfielder, Paul Bracewell, is expected to cost Fulham £75,000 and to make his debut against Blackpool at Craven Cottage tomorrow.

The Coventry City striker Dion Dublin will know by Mon-

day whether the Football Association will support his appeal against his sending-off in the Premiership match with Blackburn at Ewood Park 12 days ago. The FA disciplinary committee chairman, Geoff Thompson, will view video evidence of Dublin's aerial challenge on Colin Hendry, which led to the red card.

The Coventry chairman, Bryan Richardson, has warned that the colossal wages being paid out to players in the Premiership are threatening clubs' futures.

Richardson also wants the Sky Blues to seek a silver lining by moving from Highfield Road to a multi-purpose leisure complex in order to bolster the club's financial security.

Richardson split out it was revealed that Coventry had made a record £10m loss for the year ending in May 1997. Coventry's turnover increased by 25 per cent in that 12-month period – from £9m to £12m – but the

money nearly all went on wage increases, which soared from £6m to £8.5m.

Richardson said that while the club's income has continued to mount, the cost of players' salaries has risen even faster. He warned: "The situation is the most serious problem facing professional football clubs. It is hard to envisage a solution if a club is to remain in the Premiership."

The Bolton manager, Colin Todd, has made a move for Leicester City's unsettled striker Steve Claridge.

Todd is ready to bid farewell to the unsettled midfielder Jamie Pollock. Todd left Pollock on the bench at the weekend and the former Under-21 international has seen him to discuss his future.

Manchester United's young left-back John O'Kane could be on his way to Birmingham City. Trevor Francis, the Birmingham manager, is hoping to sign the player next week.

— Andrew Martin

### Country first for Davison

The Northern Ireland goalkeeper Aidan Davison has put country before club.

The Grimsby player was originally named in Bryan Hamilton's squad for tomorrow's Group Nine qualifier against Portugal in Lisbon, but had to withdraw because his club understudy, Jason Pearcey, has suffered a recurrence of his hernia trouble. But then the Manchester City goalkeeper Tommy Wright pulled out of the Northern Ireland party – and Davison answered Hamilton's request to rejoin them.

"It's nice to be involved again but it's a Catch 22 situation for me," Davison said. "I've been put in an impossible situation between playing for my club, who have no fit goalkeeper, and joining the Northern Ireland squad." Davison also said that he himself is not fully fit. "I've been playing with an elbow injury for the last three weeks," he said.

### NON-LEAGUE NOTEBOOK

#### Knypersley Victoria hope to join the big names

The clubs contesting this weekend's third qualifying round of the FA Cup know that they are just two wins away from a place in the first round proper and a possible tie against glamorous opposition like Fulham or Burnley.

For teams like Yeovil Town, who entertain Chippenham, the first round is familiar territory. That is not the case for several of the smaller clubs still in the competition, like Woodbridge Town from Suffolk, who travel to Solihull Borough on Sunday, and the Staffordshire side Knypersley Victoria. They entertain Spalding tomorrow after achieving one of the best results in their history in the last round: a 3-1 home win over the Dr Martens League champions, Gresley Rovers.

"We did just as well in the first qualifying round when we

beat Atherstone, who are doing better than Gresley this season," a proud John Shenton, Knypersley's secretary, said yesterday. "This is only our third season in the FA Cup."

Woodbridge are having to make the long journey to the West Midlands because the Football Association has reduced the regionalisation of the qualifying rounds. Another Suffolk side, Sudbury Wanderers, fell foul of this in the last round. After holding Bromsgrove Rovers 1-1 at home, they went to Worcester for the midweek replay without some of their best players, who could not take time off work, and lost 2-0.

Leighton James, the former Burnley and Wales winger, is back in management at the UniBond League club Accrington Stanley. He was previously in charge of Gains-

borough Trinity, Morecambe and Netherfield. James excelled at cricket in the summer when, playing for Heysham, he broke the record for runs scored in a season in the Westmorland League.

Elsewhere in the UniBond League, the Greta goalkeeper, Glenn Johnstone, is making a name for himself, having scored two goals last month with kicks from inside his own penalty area.

The Littlehampton goalkeeper, Mark Howells, had less luck from much closer range last month. An FA Cup replay against Marlow was decided by a penalty shoot-out and after all 20 outfield players scored with their spot-kicks, so did the Marlow custodian, Jamie Jackson. Howells shot wide, though, to give Marlow an 11-10 shoot-out success.

— Rupert Matfield

# Cup winners' path to Europe barred

## Heavyweight Douillet spearheads takeover by France

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